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To the Rev. G. S. Faber

With the Author's sincere respect

and gratitude.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT

TRACED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD:

ATTESTING

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL OF MAN

BY THE INSTRUMENTALITY

OF A

SERPENT TEMPTER.

BY THE

REV. JOHN BATHURST DEANE, M.A. F.S.A.

LATE OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Παρὰ παντὶ τῶν νομιζομένων παρ' ὑμῖν θεῶν, Ὄφις σύμβολον μέγα, καὶ μυστήριον, ἀναγράφεται.—JUSTIN MARTYR, *Apol.* lib. i. p. 60.

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BY

HIS OBLIGED AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE deception of Eve by Satan, through the instrumentality of a *serpent*, has ever been an object of ridicule with the profane, who, reading without reflection, or reflecting without reading, deem that "a foolishness" which they cannot understand, or that "a stumbling-block" which they cannot explain away. Thus faith, which had defied the sophistry of the acutest sceptic, has been sometimes shaken by an incredulous sneer: and Christians, who would have scorned to be argued out of their religion, have not been ashamed to be laughed out of it.

To establish by the testimony of heathen authorities the credibility of the Temptation and Fall of Man in Paradise, *through the agency of Satan in a serpent's form*, is my endeavour in the following Treatise: nor is it with a vain confidence that every argument adduced is either *new* or *conclusive*. Many have gone before me

in the same path of inquiry, though not to the same extent; and whatever I have found either useful in their arguments, or apt in their illustrations, I have unhesitatingly adopted and as readily acknowledge. But where no reference records the author of any opinion, I am content to take the responsibility upon myself; desiring only that the whole theory may not be pronounced untenable on account of the deficiency of any inconsiderable portion of it. For the force of the argument consists not in the independent importance of every individual inference, but in the *aggregate effect of all.* Facts in themselves apparently insignificant, and coincidences which *singly* might be deemed fortuitous, often assume *in connexion* a character and a consistency which amount to the weight of irresistible evidence. If, therefore, by the aggregate testimony of facts inconsiderable in themselves, and only considerable through the consistency with which they mutually support each other, the main object of this treatise—*the universality of Ophiolatreia*—can be proved, the point is gained; the proposition is demonstrated.

Many writers have remarked that the worship of the serpent by the ancient heathen is a con-

clusive proof of the Fall of Man by the seduction of a serpent-tempter: but failing to show its *universal* prevalence, have reaped but half the advantages of their argument. They have left the multitude either doubtful of its force, or relying for the truth of it upon their authority only; while habitual unbelievers, who never search for themselves, deeming all such authorities suspicious, because interested, and interested because, for the most part, *ecclesiastical*, reject the reasoning and renounce the conclusion.

I have therefore endeavoured to establish the *fact*, while I appeal to the *argument:* to *prove* the universality of Serpent-worship, while I adduce the universal worship of the Serpent as a testimony to the Temptation and Fall of Man.

Of all the writers who have treated of this subject, Bryant and Faber may be regarded as the chief. But even these learned men have only considered it in the course of a System of Analysis of Pagan Idolatry. With either of these authors the worship of the serpent forms but a part of a more comprehensive work; and their observations, of necessity, have been circumscribed. To them, however, I am indebted for a great part of my information,

and only do not praise them so highly as I honour them, because one is beyond, and *both* above all praise.

To the kindness of the latter I have been still more indebted since the publication of the first edition of this treatise. Many valuable corrections, noticed as they occur, have been voluntarily communicated by Mr. Faber; and it is to me a source of no little gratification, that in my first effort to be useful, I have obtained the encouragement of the first of Christian scholars.

The Worship of the Serpent had already attracted the notice of the learned, when Bryant and Faber, each improving upon the discoveries of his predecessors, fixed its data upon a lasting basis. It was deemed a fit field for the recreation of the unwearied genius of Dr. Stukeley, whose work upon Abury is a masterpiece of ingenuity, and a key to the most obscure part of Ophiolatreia—*the figure of the serpent temples.* On this interesting subject nothing was even *guessed at*, until his master-hand evoked, as by the wave of a magician's wand, the Python of Delphi in the wilds of Wiltshire.

Other eminent writers, among whom Bishop

Stillingfleet should have honourable mention, have cursorily noticed the serpent-worship of the ancients. In the works of Mr. Maurice, also, much may be found interesting and useful, as connecting Ophiolatreia with the superstitions of the Brahmins of Hindûstan. Captain Franklin has likewise entered upon the subject in a chapter of his History of the Jains and Budhists, in which he gives a short, but excellent, analysis of the prevalence of Ophiolatreia in the ancient world. The plan of this analysis is so nearly the same as the one adopted in the following treatise, that I shall probably find some difficulty in persuading the reader that it was not the prototype of the present volume. But I can assure him that I never even *heard* of the existence of Captain Franklin's book, until twelve months after the publication of my own. It is only, however, in the general outline that they are similar. This treatise enters more minutely into the subject, and follows the serpent-god into more regions of the world. The application of the subject is also more extensively theological, and the scope of the inquiry considerably greater. I shall therefore be secure from the charge of

plagiarism with every one who compares the two volumes together.

Among foreigners, Bochart, Vossius, Kircher, and Heinsius may be profitably consulted. There is also a tract "*De Cultu Serpentum*," written by M. Koch, but valuable chiefly, as proving the idolatry in Scandinavia. Bryant mentions a treatise by *Philip* Olearius, entitled "Ophiolatreia:" but I cannot find it in any of the public libraries which I have searched.

I am not aware of any other important work upon the subject. I have made full use of all the foregoing authors; avoiding only, as much as possible, the etymological conjectures of Bryant, which are considered by some critics as open to objection. In this I have followed rather the taste of the age than my own conviction; for these conjectures are at all times ingenious, frequently plausible, and sometimes incontrovertible. Whenever they have appeared to be as coming under the last class, I have not hesitated to use them.

The plan of this work is simple. It professes to prove the existence of Ophiolatreia in almost every considerable country of the ancient world; and to discover, in the mythology of every

civilized nation, evidences of a recollection of the events in Paradise. If these facts can be established, the conclusion is obvious—that all such traditions must have had a common origin; and that the most ancient record, which contains their basis, must be the authentic history. The most ancient record containing this basis, is the Book of Genesis, composed by Moses. The Book of Genesis, therefore, contains the history upon which the fables, rites, and superstitions of the mythological serpent are founded.

I cannot close these remarks without recording my obligation to a gentleman whose sound and varied learning is equalled by the kindness with which he imparts it; and from whom no writer departs without encouragement, whose object is to promote or to protect the truth. The Rev. Lancelot Sharpe will, I trust, pardon this allusion, as due to one who kindly looked over the MSS. of the first edition of this treatise; and as one to whom I am indebted for many valuable suggestions.

Neither can I, in justice to my own sense of obligations, omit the mention of my esteemed friend, P. C. Delagarde, Esq. of Exeter, to

whose ingenuity I owe much that is novel and interesting in the present volume; especially the discovery of the origin of columnar architecture in the avenues of the Dracontium.

In conclusion, I must remark, that the present edition of this treatise, although very superior to the last, both as to correctness of information, and quantity of new matter, is still only an *introduction* to what *may* be written on "the Worship of the Serpent," as connected with the Fall and Redemption of Man. And I shall hail the day with pleasure, when "some person of *true learning* and *a deep insight* into antiquity shall go through *(with this view)* with the history of the serpent[1]." It would be, indeed, as Bryant most justly observes, "a noble undertaking, and very edifying in its consequences;" and if this short syllabus shall be in any degree instrumental to a work so desired, it will not have been written in vain.

JOHN BATHURST DEANE.

LAURENCE POUNTNEY-HILL, LONDON,
July 12, 1833.

[1] Bryant, Anal. 2. 219.

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THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE FALL OF MAN.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE FALL OF MAN.

I. THAT man, in his present state of ignorance, infirmity and wickedness, is not the Adam of God's hand—the similitude of his Creator—the being which he was when God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," placed him in Paradise, and pronounced him "good,"—is an observation not resulting from metaphysical research, but obvious to the most simple, unlettered mind. To the truth of it responds every feeling of our nature, and every voice from the Scriptures; and whether we look into *ourselves* or into *them*, we read the same writing,

indited by the same Spirit: "*There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not*[1]."

Whence then this corruption, so great, so universal? Whence this unsparing and appalling ruin? "*By* ONE MAN *sin entered into the world, and death by sin*[2]." "*By the offence of* ONE, *judgment came upon* ALL MEN *to condemnation*[3]." "*By* ONE MAN'S *disobedience*, MANKIND (οἱ πολλοι) *were made sinners*[4]."

But consequences so ruinous as the corruption of the body and soul of all his posterity,—the dissolution of the one, and the eternal banishment of the other from the presence of GOD,—could not have resulted from the disobedience of ONE MAN, had the sin which he committed fallen short of the most aggravated which he could commit. Scripture and reason declare GOD to be "just:" he would not therefore have "visited the sin of the father upon the children," had not THAT SIN been of a nature THE MOST ODIOUS in his sight. This necessary conclusion from established premises, has induced many a well-meaning but ill-

[1] Eccl. vii. 20. [2] Rom. v. 12.
[3] Rom. v. 18. [4] Rom. v. 19.

reflecting Christian to represent the history of the fall of man as AN ALLEGORY. But allegorizing Scripture is at all times a hazardous, and sometimes a dangerous, practice. It is so in the case before us: for if the narrative of the Fall be allegorical, the promise of the Redemption must be allegorical likewise, since the serpent enters personally into the one, as well as the other. But the promise of Redemption, though figuratively expressed, assumes *the real agency* of the Serpent in the Fall: we conclude, therefore, that not only did the serpent bring about this calamity upon man, but that he brought it about in the very manner in which it is described by the woman: "THE SERPENT *beguiled me, and I did eat.*"

Having stated this, the sacred historian says no more; leaving it to the understanding and common sense of the children of Israel to conclude that the serpent's form must have been assumed by a spirit of extraordinary power and malignity, the better to accomplish his object of seduction. That this powerful and malignant spirit was the Devil, we are expressly informed by St. John, who calls the dragon of the Apocalypse "*that old serpent called the Devil and*

Satan, that deceiveth the whole world[1]." The author of the Book of Wisdom attributes the fall of man to the agency of the Devil: "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity; but *through envy of the Devil came death into the world*[2]." St. Paul, alluding to the same event, ascribes it to the serpent:—"But I fear lest by any means, as *the serpent* beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ[3]."

These incidental allusions to the agency of the Devil under the form of a serpent, are perhaps more valuable in corroborating the account of Moses, than if the whole narrative of the Fall were in so many words recapitulated by the other sacred writers: for these writers, being Jews, had no reason for enforcing the assent of their contemporaries to facts which were universally admitted. Hence incidental allusions as to a fact well known, are all that we can expect to find in the sacred writings respecting the agency of Satan and the Serpent, in the ruin of mankind. These are abundant; and from the event which they assume, arose the meta-

[1] Rev. xii. 9. [2] Wisd. ii. 23—24. [3] 2 Cor. xi. 3.

phor under which the enemies of God and the wicked are described. These are represented under the image of "*a serpent*[1]," "*a dragon*[2]," "*a leviathan, a crooked serpent*[3]," &c.; expressions which are strong presumptive evidences of the intimate connexion between the SERPENT and the EVIL SPIRIT.

Though the circumstances of the seduction and fall of man are objects of no difficulty to the faith of a Christian, yet it must be confessed that an obscurity surrounds them, which is not easily penetrable to the rash or unreflecting. Hence some have argued that the whole is allegorical, and others have pronounced the whole to be an invention: for a sceptical mind solves every difficulty by disbelief. Against either of these opinions I will endeavour to show, that the seduction of man by the agency of the serpent is *no allegory;* that the fall of man by eating of the forbidden tree is *no allegory:* that nothing could be more natural than that Adam and Eve should fall by such a simple act: and that no method of seduction could be so effective as the one employed by Satan.

[1] Isaiah xiv. 29. [2] Isaiah xxvii. 1.
[3] Isaiah xxvii. 1.

First then, let us consider THE SIN; and secondly, THE TEMPTER.

"*The Lord God said unto the woman, what is this that thou hast done*[1]?"—The offence of which she had been guilty was the eating of a tree, of which GOD had said, "*Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*[2]."

Here we perceive, amidst a general indulgence, *one particular restriction*, and a penalty attached to the violation of it. It is argued against the probability of such a condition,

First, *That the restriction is unworthy of God.*

Secondly, *That the punishment is more than adequate to the offence.*

Both of which objections I will endeavour to answer.

1. From the narrative of Moses we learn, that at the time of this sin, Adam and his wife Eve were the only human creatures in existence—that "they twain were one flesh"—and that they were without those natural propensities to wickedness, which now, unhappily, characterize their descendants. A positive com-

[1] Gen. iii. 13. [2] Gen. ii. 17.

mand was given to them, under a very severe penalty in case of disobedience; and this command was, that they should not eat the fruit of a particular tree.

If, instead of so simple a command as this, they had been enjoined, like the Jews and Christians after them, to observe inviolate the Commandments of the two tables, *would that have been a more reasonable injunction—more worthy of God—more suitable to the condition of Adam and Eve?* We apprehend *not.* The injunction would have been so far unreasonable and unworthy of God, as the violation of it was *impossible* on the part of Adam and Eve. For being themselves the *immediate* work of the Creator, and maintaining with him a continual and direct communion[1], is it possible that they could have worshipped any strange gods or idols—taken the name of GOD in vain—or by any act of irreverence profaned the Sabbath? Commandments which would restrict them from such sins as these, would have been unreasonable, and unworthy of God; *for they could not be broken.* The first table of the decalogue would therefore have been unneces-

[1] Gen. iii. 8.

sary; and if unnecessary, "unworthy of GOD" to ordain.

In like manner, Adam and Eve could not have violated any commandment of the second. The second table of the decalogue is for a state of *society:* Adam and his wife were *alone.* How could they, therefore, honour their father and mother, who had none? How could they commit adultery or theft *against each other?* How could they have borne false witness against their *neighbour*, or coveted his goods? And can we suppose that they would so far forget the sense of their common interest as to *kill* either the other, since the commission of such a crime would have left the survivor the only creature in the universe without its kind? They would not, therefore, have committed *murder*, even had they known (which is doubtful) the *nature* and the *means* of death. Commandments, therefore, which would restrict them from such sins as these, would have been unreasonable, and unworthy of GOD; for they could not, by any probability, be broken. *Besides*, the violation of them pre-supposes that *tendency to sin*—that *corruption of their nature*, which did not exist in them until after the Fall.

The offence by which Adam fell must, therefore, have been *a simple one:* so simple, that it might be committed without inherent depravity; and yet so obnoxious to GOD, as to demand his *instant* and *severest visitation.* Now what offence can we imagine more simple, more free from innate depravity, than that of eating the fruit of a forbidden tree? The inducements to eat of it were powerful; and such as, in the absence of a prohibitory command, would have been not only natural, but laudable. It was a desire to become as intelligent as the angels: a desire which, in Adam and Eve, was natural; for by the gratification of it, they would know more of GOD and of themselves: and as "the knowledge of GOD" is perfect happiness, it was natural that they should wish to perfect their enjoyments. Springing from such an origin, the desire was sinless; and only sinful when indulged in opposition to a prohibitory command.

But this command was written by the finger of GOD upon their hearts:—"*Thou shalt not eat of it.*" And this command they violated!

Simple, of necessity. was the *outward act* by which they incurred the displeasure of their Maker: but the *moral offence* involved all the

guilt which attaches to unnecessary disobedience, incredulity of GOD'S word, and defiance of his power; and under this view we may regard the sin of Adam to have been as great as if *we* were to violate *the whole of the decalogue:* for the *whole commandment* which was given to them, they *broke.*

2. But, if the prohibition was not unworthy of the dignity of GOD, was not the punishment which followed disobedience more than adequate to the offence? Certainly not. Entire disobedience, being entire unrighteousness, is manifestly obnoxious to the severest penalty. The greatness of the punishment can prove nothing but the greatness of the sin which preceded it, when the parties concerned are man and GOD. But even had the punishment been "more than adequate to the offence," it would not have been an act of injustice to inflict it. For Adam and Eve, as they knew the means of *obedience*, knew the penalty which would follow *disobedience;* they sinned, therefore, with all the consequences of sin before them. Their eyes were sufficiently "open" to know the truth which was afterwards revealed to the children

of disobedience, that "GOD is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good[1]?"

We see, then, that neither was the prohibition of the tree of knowledge of good and evil an unworthy condition on the part of GOD to make with Adam, nor the punishment which overtook the disobedient man too great for the offence.

But here it may be objected, upon the very principle of our argument,—if Adam committed sin in consequence of a natural instinct—a desire of enlarging his understanding—with this desire about him, *prompting him to sin*,—can he be said to have been created *pure?* And if he had not been created *pure*, there is no necessity for believing that he ever fell, in the peculiar manner related by Moses; for the sinfulness of man would be sufficiently accounted for by the imperfection of his origin. To this we may reply, that the desire of enlarging his understanding did not *necessarily* induce Adam to sin: sin was, indeed, the consequence of his indulging

[1] Num. xxiii. 19.

this desire, but not the *necessary* consequence. He might have indulged it by communion with GOD, instead of finding its gratification by communion with Satan. That Adam, by too great a thirst after knowledge, *fell*, does not prove that he was *prone* to sin; but it certainly does prove that he was *liable to it:* and while we deny the proneness, we not only admit, but maintain his *liability to fall.* Being created, expressly, for the greatest glory of GOD, it follows that Adam was created with that nature which was best adapted to this purpose. He was, therefore, created *pure, perfect,* and *free.* For Omnipotence itself cannot produce a nobler being than one in GOD's own spiritual likeness; perfectly sinless, and perfectly a free agent. But, however free and pure, such a person cannot be without a *liability* to sin: for if he be without a liability, he is without *responsibility,* which is an attribute suited to the Creator alone, and incommunicable to a creature. It could not, therefore, be otherwise, than that Adam should have *been liable,* though not *prone,* to sin: for that would have made his nature imperfect, and anticipated the corruption which did not exist in him until after his fall. What, before the fall,

was only a *liability*, became afterwards a *proneness to sin*. Had Adam been placed in Paradise in any other state, he would either not have been a free agent, or too free to be responsible. If not a free agent, the gift of reason was superfluous, and every superfluity detracts from *perfection*. If too free to be responsible, he would not have been a creature; for to be a creature implies subordination, and subordination implies responsibility. The only condition, therefore, in which Adam could have been placed, was that of a free agent, responsible for his actions; with obedience or disobedience, and their respective consequences, before his eyes, and with the power to choose either. Being a free agent, it was necessary that he should be placed in *a state of trial*. For his free agency consisting in a capability of choice between obedience and disobedience, his happiness would consist in a wise employment of this power[1]. And since real happiness is inseparable from holiness, Adam, to be happy, must have been holy. But holy or obedient (for it is the same thing,) he could not be, unless something were enjoined to which he might be disobedient. Adam, there-

[1] Kennicot., *Dissert. on the Tree of Life*, 33.

fore, being a free agent, was necessarily placed in a state of trial.

It appears, then, that the fall of man may be rationally explained, without having recourse to any allegorical interpretation; indeed, *what allegory* can render the circumstances more intelligible? or *of what* can the eating of a forbidden tree be allegorical? The only mysterious part of the transaction, after the assumption of the serpent's form by Satan, was the communication of intellectual knowledge by the taste of a tree. That the fruit of the forbidden tree did not affect the *body*, seems evident from the circumstance of God's dooming the body to corruption, *after* the fruit had been tasted, and "the eyes were opened." "The return to dust" was an effect of *the curse of God*, and not of any poisonous quality in *the tree*. The poison of the tree infected the mind alone: but the manner is a mystery.

There is, however, a method of explaining away the difficulty of the *communication of knowledge by means of a tree*, of which the advocate of literal interpretation may avail himself. With the learned and acute KENNICOT, he may consider that the tree in question was not to make

any change in the intellectual faculties of the recipient. By substituting the word "*test*" for "*knowledge*"—a substitution which, he contends, the original will allow—the text will become, "and the tree *which is the test* of good and evil:" that is, "the tree by which God would *try* them, and by which it should appear whether or no they would own the sovereignty of their Maker, and obey or disobey his commands[1]." Notwithstanding this ingenious, and not unsatisfactory, explanation, I prefer the received version, because it is more in accordance with the context. The effect produced upon the guilty pair is described under the metaphor, "their eyes were opened." This certainly implies that their *minds* had undergone a change; for their corporeal eyes could have seen "their nakedness" as easily before the Fall, as after; but the mind conceived no shame from the circumstance. This effect was produced by the fruit of the tree; for "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree *to be desired to make one wise*, she took of the fruit thereof, and *did eat*, and gave also to her husband with her, and *he did*

[1] Dissert. on the Tree of Life, p. 36.

eat: And their eyes were opened[1]." Between the action, "*they did eat*," and the effect, "*their eyes were opened*," there is no room for interpolating any other cause for the illumination, than the eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The copulative conjunction *and* points out the cause—namely, *the fruit of the tree.*

The seduction of Eve by the SERPENT is as far from being allegorical as the other circumstances of the Fall. Satan had determined to bring about the destruction of man, and, therefore, would approach to the accomplishment of it in the most subtil manner. For this purpose, we are taught to believe that he assumed the form of the serpent, probably because the nature of that animal most nearly resembled his own: for "the serpent was more subtil than all the beasts of the field." His own form was *spiritual;* he could not, therefore, have shown himself to Eve as he really was. He appeared, consequently, under a disguise to which she had been accustomed, and at which she would not be startled.

A beautiful but *mute* animal crossed her path, ascended the tree of knowledge, and plucked

[1] Gen. iii. 6, 7.

its fruit; and in an instant appeared gifted with the powers of reason and of speech[1]. He spoke to her; desired her to taste the same fruit which had opened *his mind;* and when, at length, having overcome her first astonishment, she refused, on the plea that God had forbidden her to touch it, he said unto her, "*Yea! hath God said*, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

If such should appear to have been the nature of the temptation which assailed Eve, who shall deny, that it was the most powerful which could be presented to the human mind? A mute and irrational creature, having tasted the fruit of this forbidden tree, became gifted with speech and reason; and how surpassing must be the knowledge which *they* would acquire by following the same course! Well, then, might she believe "that they would be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Such an interpretation of the temptation of Eve appears not only the most reasonable which can be offered to our belief, but it is, probably, the most correct, from the very language of the Scripture which describes the Fall. The third

[1] Delany, "*Revel. Examined.*"

chapter of Genesis opens in an abrupt manner; and the first words of the serpent induce the inference, that something had previously passed between him and Eve, which is not mentioned in the narrative. The words, "*Yea! hath God said?*" appear to be the continuation of a conversation already begun. This will explain the reason why the woman expresses no surprise in hearing, for the first time, a brute animal speak with the voice of a man—an explanation more natural than that adopted by Bishop Patrick. He was of opinion that the tempter assumed the form of a beautiful winged serpent, whose bright golden colour made him, when flying, to be resplendent like fire. Of this kind, he informs us, were the serpents in the wilderness which destroyed the rebellious Israelites[1]. They are called *seraphim*, from a root which signifies "*to burn.*" "The angels of the presence" were also called *seraphim*, from a similar glorious appearance[2]. The advocates of this opinion suppose that Eve took the serpent-tempter for one of these heavenly messengers, come down to enlighten her; "for she was not so simple as to think that beasts could speak[3]." This opinion is

[1] Numb. xxi. 6—8. [2] Isaiah vi. 2—6. [3] Bishop Patrick.

defended by the expression of St. Paul (2 Cor. xi. 14),—" *Satan is transformed into an angel of light.*" In the same chapter, he previously expresses his fears lest, " as *the serpent* beguiled Eve through his subtilty," so the Corinthians " should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ." It is contended that St. Paul, in noticing the transformation of Satan into an " angel of light," alludes to the deception of Eve by the serpent. But this does not necessarily appear from the argument of the apostle: it is quite as likely that he refers to the temptation of our Lord, when Satan did probably appear as " an angel of light."

But if Eve took the serpent for a *seraph*—a divine messenger sent to remove the prohibition from the tree of knowledge—how happened it that, when questioned by her Creator, " What is this that thou hast done?" she answered, unhesitatingly, " *the serpent* beguiled me, and I did eat." A reply which amounts to conclusive evidence that she believed the tempter to be a *real serpent*. As a *terrestrial* animal, the deceiver is cursed—" Upon thy belly thou shalt go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." This curse applies not to a spiritual being.

Moreover the word, which we translate "serpent," is, in the original, not "*seraph*," but "*nachash*" throughout. Conformably to which, the Septuagint employ the word ὄφις.

There is every ground, therefore, for accepting the temptation and fall of man in the *literal* sense of the Scripture, which reveals them to our faith.

That the devil, on this occasion, assumed the form of one of the angelic seraphim, was a tradition of the East, adopted or invented by the Doctors of the Jewish Church. Rabbi Bechai, on Gen. iii. 14, observes: "This is the secret (or mystery) of the holy language, that a *serpent* is called *saraph*, as an *angel* is called *saraph*;" and "hence the Scriptures called serpents *seraphim* (Numb. xxi. 6—8), because they were the offspring of this old *saraph*[1]." The *seraphim* of the wilderness are proved by Bochart to have been the same as those called in Isaiah (xix. 29. and xxx. 6), "fiery *flying* serpents." Whether the epithet "*flying*" was a metaphor for *velocity*, or whether it meant that these creatures had actually *wings*, is uncertain; it is certain, however, that tradition had invested both the *celestial*

[1] Bishop Patrick *in loc.*

and *terrestrial* seraphim with wings: and hence the notion that the Paradisiacal serpent was a "winged" creature. Hence, also, the poetical fiction of *winged dragons*, as guardians of treasure and protectors of female innocence. For, singularly enough, the malevolent actions of the Paradisiacal serpent had a colouring given by heathen mythologists diametrically opposite to the reality. The *seducer* of Eve is thus perversely termed the *protector* of maiden virtue; and the tempter, who induced her to *pluck* the forbidden fruit, is the *guardian* of the *golden apples* in the Garden of the Hesperides. So powerful is "the Prince of this World" to delude his victims!

Adam, then, was *free*, as created for God's glory; *pure*, as the similitude of his spotless nature; *perfect*, as the temple of his Holy Spirit. Of created things, the last and best on earth, he came into existence on the eve of God's holy rest; and the first duty to which he was called, was the celebration of the Sabbath. Constituted, as he was, with the capacity to comprehend, and the inclination to adore his Maker, he was created to be happy. The most perfect soul in the most perfect body, and each endued

with ability to enjoy the most perfect happiness of its nature, characterized the noblest of terrestrial beings. Had he continued in obedience, he would have continued in happiness; but, alas! the union of excellence, which conciliated the goodwill of the good angels, excited and exasperated the envy of the bad. In an hour of weakness, the tempter came: with the voice of kindness, he insinuated distrust in God; the insidious appeal was heard; the forbidden tree was tasted:—"the eyes" of man "were opened" —but his soul was lost! And in this state it continued, until, by the sacrifice of THE REDEEMER—by the bruising of HIS heel, WHO should bruise the serpent's head—that which had been "dead" was "alive again;" that which had been "lost" was "found."

II. *Allusions to the original Innocence, and subsequent Fall of Man, by Heathen Authors.*

We have regarded the Fall of Man as an historical fact, demonstrable by reason. We may, therefore, very properly require *traces* of this

event in the opinions and traditions of people upon whom the light of revelation never shone. All are descended from the same family in the ark, and it is more than probable that some vestiges of the original history of man were preserved in the traditions of the more enlightened Gentiles. Such is the conclusion of unprejudiced reason; and, in full accordance, it has been ascertained, that the philosopher, the mythologist, and the uneducated idolater of every nation, bears witness in his writings, in his fables, or in his religion, to the truth of the Mosaic history.

It is unnecessary to remind the classical reader, that the degeneracy of mankind is a common topic of complaint with the philosophers of Greece and Rome. But a few brief references to establish this position may not be deemed superfluous, as they will greatly illustrate the arguments of the subsequent pages.

1. The writings of Plato abound with allusions to the degeneracy of mankind. So closely do his ideas on this subject approach the truth, that Bishop Stillingfleet has not scrupled to affirm, "he must have known more of the lapse of mankind than he would openly discover[1]:" and

[1] Orig. Sacr. l. 3. c. 3.

Gale was so persuaded of the same thing, that he made it the chief object of his elaborate work to show that the Gentile philosopher had drank deeply of the fountain of sacred truth. He cites with approbation a saying of Numenius, the Pythagorean, Τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωυσῆς ἀττικίζων; "*What is Plato, but Moses speaking the language of Athens?*" Led away by the glare of this strong resemblance, the learned Gale ascribed the agreement to plagiarism: but it is more than probable that the fountain at which Plato drank the truth, was the broad but troubled stream of patriarchal tradition, which irrigated alike the fertile and the barren mind, in every region of the globe.

Among other striking passages in the writings of that philosopher, is the following:—"*These causes of our wickedness are derived from our parents, and from our constitutions, rather than from ourselves; for while we recoil from the works of our ancestors they are not idle*[1]:" as much as to say, that there is within us, by inheritance, a principle of sin, continually at war with the principle of righteousness; "a law in our members warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin,

[1] Timæus, 103.

which is in our members[1]." This notion is very nearly allied to the dogma of the Persians concerning the two innate principles, the good and the evil, of which we read in the very interesting story of Araspes and Panthea, related by Xenophon[2].

This state of the soul the philosopher terms "*a moral or spiritual death;*" and upon the authority of "*wise men,*" by whom Gale conjectures that he must have meant "Jewish priests:" more probably, perhaps, *Egyptian,* with whom he is known to have conversed familiarly.—"*I have heard from wise men, that we are now dead, and that the body is our sepulchre*[3]."

The change of nature which ensued immediately after the fall of man, may be alluded to by the same philosopher in his discourse of the imaginary island of Atlantis, which, upon the division of the earth between the gods, fell to the lot of Vulcan and Minerva[4]. There they created mortals of a superior mould, who lived in the unbounded enjoyment of happiness and peace.—"For many ages, as long as they were *under the influence of this divine nature,* they were

[1] Rom. vii. 23.
[2] Cyrop. lib. 8.
[3] Georgias, 493.
[4] Critias.

obedient to the laws, and well-affected to the gods, *to whom they were kindred*. . . . . but when *the divine nature, which was in them*, became frequently *mingled with the mortal*, and *the human inclination prevailed*, being unable to bear present calamities, they disgraced themselves: and, to those who could see them, appeared base, having lost the most beautiful of their precious possessions. . . . . The Jupiter, the god of gods, ... perceiving this honourable race lying in a state of depravity, and being desirous of punishing them . . . . . called together all the gods," &c.

In the *Atlantis* of Plato, we may, I think, discover the EDEN of Scripture; and in the lapse of the Atlantians from virtue and THE DIVINE NATURE, the fall of Adam from purity and THE IMAGE OF GOD. The state of mankind, at the time of the deluge, is, doubtless, blended with the tradition; for we find that the island Atlantis was submerged in the ocean. But the want of authentic records of the period intermediate between the fall and the deluge, left the heathen, in a great measure, ignorant of antediluvian history. Hence their frequent confusion of the characters of Adam and Noah, and

the identification of their histories in mythology. Of these we have constant proofs in the fables which have been transmitted to us, as we shall observe in the progress of this volume. In the council of Jupiter, to consider the depravity of the Atlantians, we may recognize a similarity to the council of the Holy Trinity: "*Behold the man is become as* ONE OF US, *to know good and evil.*"

The corruption thus acknowledged by Plato to exist in mankind, is elsewhere represented by him as "*a general depravation of the understanding, the will, and the affections.*" The corruption of the understanding he describes under the allegory of "a person who, from his infancy, lay, neck and heels together, in a dark dungeon, where he could only see some imperfect shadows, by means of a fire kindled at the top." Whence he concludes that "*the eye of the soul is immersed in the barbaric gulf of ignorance*[1]."

2. To the testimony of Plato may be added that of Hierocles, a disciple of the Platonic school, whose Commentary on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras very closely approaches Scripture truth.—"Most men are bad, and under

[1] Gale. *Court of the Gentiles*, l. 3. 63.

the influence of their passions; and, from their propensity to earth, are grown impotent of mind. But this evil they have brought upon themselves by their *wilful apostasy from God*, and *by withdrawing themselves from that communion with him, which they once enjoyed in pure light*[1]."

3. If we ascend to authority of more remote date, we shall find in "the Golden Verses" themselves this remarkable sentiment: "*Men are grown miserable through their own fault.*" An expression which argues in Pythagoras, as well as Plato, "more acquaintance with the truth than he is inclined to discover."

4. If, from the meditations of philosophers, we pass to the imaginations of poets, we shall find that neither Homer nor Hesiod were ignorant of the degeneracy of mankind. In the poetic fiction of "the Golden Age" we shall recognize a clear trace of the original purity of man, whose fall and corruption may be as clearly traced in the subsequent ages of deterioration. The opinion of Homer, that "*few children are like their fathers, the majority worse*[2]," illustrates the poetical conceit so beautifully imagined by

[1] Cited by Stillingfleet. Orig. Sac. book iii. c. 3. s. 15.

[2] Odyss. ii. 276.

Hesiod :—" Dreadfully did the second race degenerate from the virtues of the first. They were men of violence; they had no pleasure in worshipping the immortal gods; they experienced no delight in offering up to them those sacrifices which duty required[1]."

So clearly did the mind of Hesiod apprehend the real state of mankind, that, in his fable of Pandora, he seems but to paraphrase the story of Adam and Eve. Pandora was a female to whom every god and goddess imparted a virtue or an accomplishment: *she was made from clay, to be the wife of the man Prometheus*, whose nature and origin were of a more elevated caste. He was the son of Japetus, a demigod, who was the son of Cœlus—i. e. *heaven deified*. Prometheus is represented as *irreverent towards the gods*. Among other things, Pandora was presented with a beautiful casket by Jupiter, which she was to offer as a nuptial dowry to her husband; but ordered, at the same time, on no account to open it. Prometheus did not marry her, being suspicious of the design of Jupiter; but sent her to his brother, whose wife she became. *Through inordinate curiosity*, he opened the casket, *and*

[1] Oper. et Dier. i. 126.

from it issued all the evils which have ever since afflicted mankind. HOPE alone remained at the bottom, to assuage the sorrows which EVIL had introduced.

In this fable we perceive, with a little variation, a beautifully wrought description of the fall of Adam, with a delicately poetical allusion to the REDEMPTION.

5. The Latin writers are as explicit in their opinion of the corruption of man as the Greek. Among the philosophers, Cicero and Seneca; among the poets, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, Lucretius, Catullus,—agree in representing the present state of man as degenerate. It would be tedious to transcribe, or even enumerate, their testimonies, since many of the passages are familiar to the classical reader. We may, however, remark, that no *Christian* scholar should fail to impress upon his memory the splendid description of "The Four Ages," which is presented in the first book of "THE METAMORPHOSES," by OVID. If anything can add to its beauty and elegance, it is the close relation which it bears to Scriptural truth.

That man had fallen from a condition of greater purity, was, therefore, the belief of the mytholo-

gist, poet, and philosopher, of Greece and Rome. It was, moreover, the belief of every nation whose religion was moulded into system, or the system of whose religion is not altogether unintelligible. It was the belief of the Celts and Druids; and "the Brahmins of Hindostan have an entire Purana on the subject: the story is there told as related by Moses; the facts uniformly correspond, and the consequences are equally tremendous[1]." It was the belief of all the nations surrounding Syria; it penetrated into the remote regions of the Persian monarchy; and it may be recognized in the mythology of Egypt. Of these I shall adduce proofs in the sequel. But if there were no other indication of this Scriptural doctrine, the universal prevalence of EXPIATORY SACRIFICES would declare it. "For unless an idea of lost integrity had pervaded the whole world, and unless the doctrine of such an aberration had been handed down from the most remote antiquity, it is impossible to account for the universal establishment of so very peculiar an ordinance[2]."

It is not only to the existence of a natural

[1] Faber. Hor. Mos. i. 66, citing Maurice Ind. Antiq.

[2] Faber. Hor. Mos. i. 59.

corruption in man, that the philosophy of heathenism so strongly alludes; but minuter traces of THE FALL are to be recognized in the traditionary legends of heathen mythology. The most remarkable corroboration, however, of the Mosaic history, is to be found in those fables which involve THE MYTHOLOGICAL SERPENT, and in THE WORSHIP which was so generally offered to him throughout the world.

THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT may be traced in almost every religion through ancient Asia, Europe, Africa, and America. The progress of the sacred serpent from Paradise to Peru is one of the most remarkable phenomena in mythological history; and to be accounted for only upon the supposition that a corrupted tradition of the serpent in Paradise had been handed down from generation to generation. But how an object of abhorrence could have been exalted into an object of veneration, must be referred to the subtilty of the arch enemy himself, whose constant endeavour has been rather to corrupt than obliterate the true faith, that, in the perpetual conflict between truth and error, the mind of man might be more surely confounded and debased. Among other

devices, that of elevating himself into an object of adoration, has ever been the most cherished. It was this which he proposed to OUR LORD: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and *worship me*[1]." We cannot therefore wonder that the same being who had the presumption to make such a proposal to the Son of GOD, should have had the address to insinuate himself into the worship of the children of men. In this he was, unhappily, but too well seconded by the natural tendency of human corruption. The unenlightened heathen, in obedience to the voice of nature, acknowledged his dependence upon a superior being. His reason assured him that there must be a God; his conscience assured him that God was good; but he felt and acknowledged the prevalence of evil, and attributed it, naturally, to an evil agent. But as the evil agent to his unillumined mind seemed as omnipotent as the good agent, he worshipped *both; the one*, that he might propitiate his kindness; *the other*, that he might avert his displeasure. The great point of devil-worship being gained—namely, the acknowledgment of the evil spirit as GOD—the transition to

[1] Matt. iv. 9.

idolatry became easy. The mind once darkened by the admission of an allegiance divided between GOD and Satan, became gradually more feeble and superstitious, until at length sensible objects were called in to aid the weakness of degraded intellect; and from their first form as *symbols*, passed rapidly through the successive stages of apotheosis, until they were elevated into GODS. Of these the most remarkable was THE SERPENT; upon the basis of tradition, regarded, first, as the *symbol* of the malignant being; subsequently, considered *talismanic* and *oracular;* and, lastly, venerated and worshipped as DIVINE.

As a symbol, the serpent was by some nations attributed to the GOOD, and by others to the EVIL DEITY. Among the Egyptians it was an emblem of the good dæmon; while the mythology of Hindûstan, Scandinavia, and Mexico, considered it as characteristic of the evil spirit.

That in the warmer regions of the globe, where this creature is the most formidable enemy which man can encounter, the serpent should be considered the mythological attendant of the evil being, is not surprising: but that in the frozen or temperate regions of the earth,

where he dwindles into the insignificance of a reptile without power to create alarm, he should be regarded in the same appalling character, is a fact which cannot be accounted for by natural causes. Uniformity of tradition can alone satisfactorily explain uniformity of superstition, where local circumstances are so discordant.

The serpent is the symbol which *most* generally enters into the mythology of the world. It may in different countries admit among its fellow-satellites of Satan, the most venomous or the most terrible of the animals in each country; but it preserves its own constancy, as *the only invariable* object of superstitious terror throughout the habitable world. "Wherever the Devil reigned," remarks Stillingfleet, "the serpent was held in some peculiar veneration." THE UNIVERSALITY of this worship, I propose to show in the subsequent pages: and having shown it, shall feel justified in drawing the conclusion, that the narrative of Moses is most powerfully corroborated by the prevalence of this singular and irrational, yet natural superstition. *Irrational* —for there is nothing in common between deity and a reptile, to suggest the notion of SERPENT-WORSHIP; and *natural*, because allowing the

truth of the events in Paradise, every probability is in favour of such a superstition springing up. For it is more than probable that Satan should erect as the standard of idolatry the stumbling-block ascertained to be fatal to man. By so doing, he would not only receive the homage which he so ardently desired from the beginning, but also be perpetually reminded of his victory over Adam, than which no gratification can be imagined more fascinating to his malignant mind. It was his device, therefore, that since by the temptation of the serpent man fell, by the *adoration* of the serpent he should continue to fall.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER I.

SERPENT-WORSHIP IN ASIA.

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THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT is supposed by Bryant to have commenced in Chaldæa; and to have been the "first variation from the purer Zabaism[1]."

That it was intimately connected with Zabaism cannot be doubted; for the most prevailing emblem of the solar god was the SERPENT[2]: and wherever the Zabæan idolatry was the religion, the SERPENT was the sacred symbol. But the UNIVERSALITY of serpent-worship, and the strong traces which it has left in ASTRONOMICAL MYTHOLOGY, seem to attest an origin coëval with Zabaism itself.

The earliest authentic record of SERPENT-WORSHIP is to be found in the astronomy of Chaldæa and China; but the extensive diffusion of this remarkable superstition through the re-

[1] Analysis of Anc. Myth. ii. 458.

[2] Macrobius *Saturnal.* lib. i. c. 20.

maining regions of the globe, where Chinese wisdom never penetrated, and Chaldæan philosophy was but feebly reflected, authorizes the inference that neither China nor Chaldæa was the mother, but that both were the children of this idolatry. That accidental circumstances very materially affected the religions of the early heathen at different times, by introducing innovations both in gods and altars, worship and sacrifices, cannot be denied; but it is equally true, that uniformly with the progress of the first deviation from the truth, has advanced the sacred serpent from Paradise to Peru. To follow the traces of this sacred serpent is the intention of the following treatise: and it is confidently expected that few ancient nations of any celebrity will be found which have not, at some time or other, admitted the serpent into their religion, either as *a symbol of divinity*, or *a charm*, or *an oracle*, or A GOD[1]. Into the creed of some he

[1] The universality of serpent-worship is alluded to by Lucan in these memorable lines:—

"Vos quoque, qui *cunctis* innoxia NUMINA *terris*
Serpitis, aurato nitidi fulgore, DRACONES."

Phars. lib. ix. 727.

Draco is the general term to signify all *large* serpents.

has insinuated himself in all these characters, and is so mixed up with their traditions of the ORIGIN and END of EVIL, that we cannot, without violence to all rules of probability, reject the consequence—*that the prototype of this idolatry was* THE SERPENT IN PARADISE.

1. BABYLON.—In tracing the progress of the sacred serpent, we commence with ASIA, as the mother country of mankind; and in Asia, with BABYLON, as the most ancient seat of an established priesthood.

The information which we possess concerning the minute features of Babylonian idolatry, is from various causes very narrowly circumscribed. Either the classical writers who visited Babylon were not admitted into the arcana of the Chaldæan worship, or they were contented with giving a short and summary account of it; expending the chief strength of their descriptive powers upon the history, policy, and magnificence of the mother of cities. Herodotus, whose diffuseness on the history and customs of the Babylonians is considerable, enters but little into their religion; and Diodorus Siculus, minute in his measurements of the walls and gardens,

comprises his description of the temple of Belus in a few sentences. Ophiolatreia, as a recognized religion, was nearly extinct when Diodorus visited Babylon, for the city was almost deserted by its inhabitants, and the public edifices were crumbling to decay. But the silence of Herodotus is the more remarkable, since he mentions the serpent-worship of both Egypt and Greece, which was prevalent in his time. The idolatry could scarcely be obsolete in Babylon at that period, since it existed in full vigour but seventy years before, in the days of Daniel; and though it received a signal overthrow from its exposure by that prophet, yet the tumultuous conduct of the Babylonians on that occasion, as it evinces their attachment to the idolatry, warrants the inference that they would cling to it long after its abolition, even by a royal decree[1]. But most probably Herodotus did not take the trouble to inquire into the superstitions of the common people, being content to describe what was the established religion; and even this he notices in a very cursory manner.

From Diodorus, however, we learn what is sufficient to assure us, that the serpent, as an

[1] Bel and the Dragon, v. 28.

object of worship, was not altogether forgotten in Babylon, though disguised under the more specious appearance of symbolical sanctity. He informs us, that in the temple of Bel, or Belus, was "an image of the goddess Rhea, sitting on a golden throne; at her knees stood two lions, and near her very large SERPENTS of silver, thirty talents each in weight." There was also "an image of Juno, holding in her right hand the head of a SERPENT[1]."

The name of the national god BEL is *supposed* to signify nothing more than "Lord;" and was also sometimes appropriated to deified heroes[2]. It is more probably an abbreviation of OB-EL[3], —"*The Serpent-god.*" The Greeks, remarks Bryant, called him BELIAR, which is singularly interpreted by Hesychius to signify a DRAGON, or GREAT SERPENT[4]. From which we may conclude

[1] Diod. Sic. lib. ii. s. 70.

[2] Kircher. Œdip. Ægyptiac. i. 262.

[3] See "Serpent-worship in Syria."

[4] Clemens Alexandrinus writes ΒΕΛΙΑΡ in the text. 2 Cor. vi. 15. There are several MSS. of this epistle, in which βελιαρ is found instead of βελιαλ—such as those of Lincoln, Magdalen, and New Colleges, in Oxford, and Emmanuel College in Cambridge.—*Allwood. Lit. Antiq. of Greece*, 244.

BELIAR appears to be a compound of BEL and AUR, *the*

that the serpent was, *at least*, an emblem or symbol of BEL. But if the apocryphal history of "BEL AND THE DRAGON" be founded upon any tradition, we must conclude that the dragon, or serpent, (for the words are synonymous,) was something more than a mere symbol: we must conclude, that LIVE SERPENTS were kept at Babylon as objects of adoration; or, *at least*, of veneration, as oracular or talismanic. This custom was observed at Thebes in Egypt [1], and at Athens [2]; and therefore there is nothing incredible in the fact at Babylon. However suspiciously then we may regard the apocryphal writings in general, we are constrained to admit that the author of "Bel and the Dragon," though he may have embellished the narrative, has given us a true picture of Babylonian superstition.

"In that same place there was a GREAT DRAGON, which they of Babylon WORSHIPPED. And the king said unto Daniel, 'Wilt thou say that this is of brass? lo! he eateth and drinketh:

solar deity, from אוֹר, *light*. BELIAL has a similar signification, being compounded of BEL and AL, *deus*. "*Iaul*," in the Breton language, is the name of the solar deity.

[1] Herod. ii. 74. [2] Herod. viii. 41.

thou canst not say he is no LIVING GOD: therefore WORSHIP HIM.'"

From the Chaldæans, we are told, that the Hebrews obtained the word ABADON, as a title of the "Prince of Darkness." This word may signify "THE SERPENT-LORD." Heinsius[1] (cited by Bryant) makes Abadon to be the same as the Grecian Python. "It is not to be doubted that the Pythian Apollo is that evil spirit whom the Hebrews call OB and ABADON; the Hellenists, APOLLYON; and the other Greeks, APOLLO. This is corroborated by the testimony of St. John, who says, "They had a king over them which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abadon; but in the Greek (Hellenistic) tongue hath his name Apollyon[2]." This same "angel of the bottomless pit," is in another place called by the Evangelist, "*the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan*[3]."

Subject to the king of Babylon was Assyria; and the people of this country are said to have borne "a dragon" upon their standard[4]. It is observed by Bryant, that in most countries the

[1] Aristarchus, p. 11. [2] Rev. ix. 11. [3] Rev. xx. 1, 2.

[4] Koch. de Cultu Serpentum, s. 7. p. 30.

original military standard was descriptive of the deity they worshipped. It is certain that the Roman soldiers paid great veneration to their military insignia, almost amounting to worship: from which we may infer, that the devices on them were, originally, emblems of the gods. Their chief ensign, *the eagle*, was sacred to Jupiter. From the practice of the Romans, we may obtain an insight into that of the other nations of antiquity; for in matters of superstition it is astonishing how nearly people, geographically the most remote, approached each other.

From the Assyrians, the emperors of Constantinople are said to have borrowed the dragon standard[1]. The same standard was also borne by the Parthians[2], Scythians[3], Saxons[4], Chinese, Danes[5], and Egyptians,—people who were in a greater or less degree addicted to serpent-worship. We may therefore infer, that the dragon ensign of the Assyrians denoted their devotion to the same idolatry.

[1] Vossius de Idol. lib. iv. c. 54, citing Codinus.

[2] Salmasius Hist. Aug. Script. 96.

[3] Koch. *ut supra*.—Suidas.

[4] Stukely. Abury. 56.

[5] Koch.

II. PERSIA.—The serpent-worship of Persia is more noticed by authors than that of Babylonia. The dracontic standard distinguished the Persians as well as the Assyrians; for among the spoils taken by Aurelian from Zenobia were "*Persici Dracones*[1];" which were doubtless military ensigns, for the Persians assisted the queen of Palmyra on that occasion. This, according to our hypothesis, would denote that the Persians venerated the serpent; an inference which is abundantly proved from their mythology.

In the mythology of Persia we may look for the remnant of the ancient Chaldæan philosophy: and in proportion as we establish the prevalence of ophiolatreia in Persia, in the same proportion, *at least*, we may infer that it once obtained in Babylon.

So strongly marked was this character of idolatry in the Persian religion, that Eusebius does not hesitate to affirm, "they all worshipped the first principles under the form of SERPENTS, having dedicated to them temples in which they performed sacrifices, and held festivals and orgies,

[1] Vopiscus Hist. Aug. Script. 218.

esteeming them THE GREATEST OF GODS, and GOVERNORS OF THE UNIVERSE [1]."

"The first principles" were Ormuzd and Ahriman, the good and evil deity, whose contention for the universe was represented in Persian mythology, by two serpents contending for the MUNDANE EGG. They are standing upon their tails, and each of them has fastened upon the object in dispute with his teeth. The egg for which they contend, represented the universe in the mythologies of India, Egypt, and Persia. An engraving of this may be seen in Montfaucon. But the EVIL PRINCIPLE was more particularly represented by the serpent, as we may infer from a fable in the Zenda Vesta, in which that deity is described as having assumed a serpent's form to destroy *the first of the human species*, whom he accordingly *poisoned* [2].

A similar proof occurs in the Sadder [3], where we find the following precept:—"When you kill serpents, you shall repeat the Zenda Vesta, and thence you will obtain great merit: for it is the same as if you had killed *so many devils*." The *Zenda Vesta* to be here "repeated" might,

[1] Præp. Evang. i. 42. [2] Faber, Hor. Mos. l. 72.

[3] Porta 47. Apud Hyde. Rel. Vet. Pers. 478.

perhaps, be that portion of it above alluded to—the assumption of the serpent's form by Ahriman. Connected with which, doubtless, was the popular belief of the Persians, that in the place of torment in the other world, scorpions and *serpents* gnaw and sting the feet of the wicked [1].

The God MITHRAS was represented encircled by a serpent: and in his rites a custom was observed similar to that practised in the Mysteries of Sebazius [2]—*a serpent* was thrown into the bosom of the initiated, and taken out at the lower parts of his garments [3]. In Montfaucon, vol. v. are some plates of Mithras, with a lion's head and a human body; and round him is coiled *a large winged serpent*. In the Supplement to vol. i. Montfaucon gives us a representation of a stone found at Lyons. It is a rude stone, exhibiting the head of a young and beardless man. Under it is the inscription, "DEO INVICTO MITHIR, SECUNDINUS DAT:" and under

[1] This creed is inculcated in the Ardivaraf Nameh, a work on the ancient religion of Persia.

[2] Maurice Ind. Ant. iii. 199.

[3] Arnobius, lib. v. p. 171. Jul. Firm. p. 23.

the inscription, the raised figure of *a large serpent*. Mithras was styled "invictus," and often represented with a youthful countenance, like that of Apollo.

Mandelsoe, who visited an ancient temple at Mardasch, saw in one of the recesses, "a square pillar, with the figure of a king upon it, worshipping the SUN, FIRE, and A SERPENT[1]." "On the front of some ancient Persian grottoes, sacred to the solar deity, was figured a princely personage approaching an altar, on which the sacred fire is burning. Above all is the sun, and the figure of the deity in a cloud, with sometimes a sacred bandage, at other times a SERPENT entwined round his middle[2]."

This is the God AZON, whose name, according to Bryant, signifies "the sun." The sacred girdle round his waist was esteemed an emblem of the orbit described by ZON, the sun. Hence *girdles* were called by the Greeks, *zones*[3].

This deity is sometimes represented differently[4], as a young man in profile, round whose

[1] Mandelsoe, Travels, chap. i.

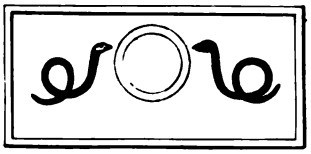
[2] Bryant. Anal. i. 276; plate in vol. ii. 406.

[3] Ibid. ii. 407.

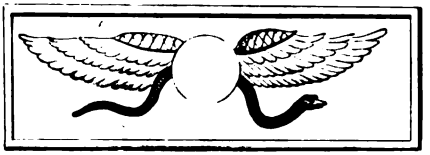
[4] Ibid. plate 406.

Deus Agathodæmon Persicus

From Kæmpfer



A Chinese Device



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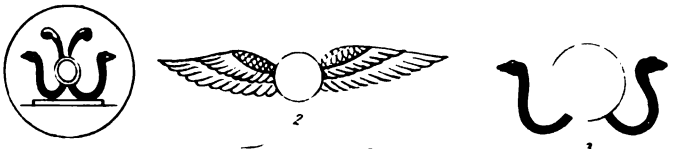
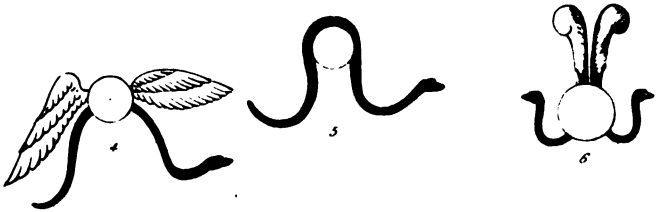


From the Isiac Table



J Hooke sc. 302 Strand.

From Bryant.

London. Published by J.G. & F. Rivington St Paul's Church Yard, & Waterloo Place 1833

waist is drawn a ring loosely dependent. Through the lower part of this ring passes a *serpent*. At the upper limb of the circle, behind the figure, is a kind of mantle, composed of expanded wings.

In Kœmpfer's Amœnit. Exot. the same deity is described in a third form. He appears terminating at the waist in a *circle*, which is composed of a *serpent:* from each side of this circle proceed four *wings*. In his left hand he holds another circle, or ring, composed, like the former, of a *serpent biting his own tail*. This painting was at Persepolis. Here is also, in Kœmpfer, p. 312, a figure of a priest of this god, who appears to be approaching an altar with a *serpent in his left hand*. In the sky above is a representation of his deity, and behind the God is the Sun.

The hierogram of the CIRCLE WINGS and SERPENT is one of the most curious emblems of Ophiolatreia, and may be recognised in almost every country where Serpent-Worship prevailed. It forms a prominent feature in the Persian, Egyptian, and Mexican hieroglyphics. China, Hindûstan, Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor, as distinctly, though more rarely, exhibit it; and it has even been found in Britain. It seems to

have been a general symbol of *consecration*, and as such is alluded to by the poet Persius:

Pinge *duos angues;* pueri *sacer est locus.*

Sat. I. 113.

Here *two* snakes are mentioned, which is the hierogram of the worshippers of the Two Principles, each of whom is represented by a serpent. Often, however, only one serpent appears issuing from the winged circle, and sometimes the circle is shorn of its wings. As a symbol of consecration, the ophite hierogram appears over the portals of the Egyptian temples, and may be recognised even in those of Java. The Druids, however, with the consistent magnificence which characterized their religion, transferred the symbol from the portal to the whole temple; and instead of placing the circle and serpent over the entrance into their sanctuaries, erected the entire building itself *in the form of the ophite hierogram.* Abury in Wiltshire, and Stanton Drew in Somersetshire, are interesting examples of this construction. The former represents the ophite hierogram with *one* serpent, the latter with *two;* the circle in each case being destitute of wings.

On the ruins of Naki Rustan, in Persia, is a beautiful specimen of the serpent and winged

circle. In Egypt the hierogram underwent various transformations, of which the annexed plate gives a description. One of them, No. 2, is perhaps the device from which Malachi borrowed his elegant metaphor of "THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS arising with healing in his WINGS."

Selden remarks, that the figure in abbreviated writing among the Greeks, signified Δαιμων, *the deity*[1]. The same figure, according to Kircher, was in use among the Brahmins of Hindûstan, as the "*character mundi intelligibilis*[2]"—that is, of the Deity; for the universe and its Creator were often confounded by the ancient heathen. The emblem is evidently the globe and serpents of Egyptian mythology. In the same form was erected the celebrated temple of the Druids at Abury in Wiltshire. The upright stones which constituted the Adytum and its approaches, correctly delineated the circle, with the serpent passing through it[3].

In China, this sacred emblem assumed a form

[1] Seld. on Arund. Marbles, 133, cited by Stukely, Abury, 56.

[2] Œdip. Ægyp. vol. iii. p. 23.

[3] For an account of this temple, see the Chapter on Ophite Temples.

unknown in other countries. The serpents were *separated* from the annulus, being placed on each side of it, regarding each other. This was probably a representation of the two principles claiming the universe. This sacred ring between two serpents, is very common on the triumphal arches of Pekin. In Table XV. of Baron Vischer's Ancient Architecture[1], is an engraving of such an arch, and on it is this hierogram twice depicted.

But the most remarkable of all is the Mexican symbol. Here the two serpents, intertwining, form the circle with their own bodies, and in the mouth of each of them is a *Human head!*

A similar figure was assumed by the Ophite hierogram when it appeared on the staff of Mercury, and constituted the Caduceus. The serpents intertwining formed the circle.

The origin of this symbol is to be found in the deification of the serpent of Paradise. Its real meaning is involved in much mystery. In the former edition of this treatise I advanced the opinion, that it meant nothing more than *the winged serpent once coiled.* But further consideration has induced me to give up this conjecture

[1] Stukely, Abury, 56.

as irreconcileable with the connection of the Serpent and *Globe*. The most probable meaning may be that which I have assigned in the chapter on Serpent Temples: namely, that it is the hierogram of the Solar Ophite God OPHEL or APOLLO; and assumed its present shape from the *union* of the two idolatries of the Serpent and the Sun. For the grounds of this conjecture I refer to the chapter cited.

At all events it is certain, that the tripartite emblem of the *Serpent*, *Wings*, and *Circle*, was an hieroglyphic of the DEITY; and this is sufficient for the purposes of my argument.

The Egyptian priests of a later and more metaphysical age, understanding this to be the signification of the hierogram, addressed themselves to the task of discovering the mystery. A most ingenious theory was accordingly devised by Hermes Trismegistus, who was probably the high-priest of the God Thoth, or "Thrice-great Hermes," whose name he assumed in compliance with the universal custom of the religion. The God Thoth was believed to have been the author of the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

According to this theory, the GLOBE typified the SIMPLE ESSENCE OF GOD, which he indiffer-

ently called THE FATHER, THE FIRST MIND, THE SUPREME WISDOM. THE SERPENT emerging from the GLOBE was the VIVIFYING POWER of GOD, which called all things into existence. This he named THE WORD.

The WINGS implied the MOVING or PENETRATIVE POWER of GOD, which pervaded all things. This he called LOVE.

The *whole* emblem was interpreted to represent the SUPREME BEING in his character of CREATOR and PRESERVER [1].

The definition of the Deity by TRISMEGISTUS is poetically sublime: "GOD is a CIRCLE whose CENTRE is EVERYWHERE, and CIRCUMFERENCE NOWHERE [2]."

The above description of the ophite hierogram, as may well be imagined, has persuaded many an ardent friend of revelation to recognise in this symbol of the hieroglyphical learning of Egypt, the mystery of the HOLY TRINITY. Kircher, Cudworth, and Maurice have all embraced this opinion; but the more cautious FABER [3], with the arguments of all before him, has come to the conclusion, that the doctrine of the Tri-

[1] Kircher, Pamph. Obel. 399. [2] Ibid. 380.

[3] Dissert. on the Cabiri, l. 316.

nity, in its Christian sense, was unknown to the Pagans.

That there has been but one essential religion *among the servants* of the living God, from the fall to the present hour, no reasonable reader of the Holy Scriptures can deny. There never has been a time in which TRUE RELIGION has been wholly lost. Some few, if not "seven thousand," have always been "left" who "have not bowed the knee to Baal." But for these few, who have had a right knowledge and clear conception of the Deity as revealed to Adam, we must look among the holy "remnant," who were at one time confined to the family of NOAH, and at another to that of ABRAHAM. The rapidity with which the descendents of Noah fell into POLYTHEISM forbids our being too sanguine in the hope of discovering the doctrine of the Trinity among the Gentiles. *This doctrine itself, corruptly remembered, perhaps gave rise to that very Polytheism which at length obliterated almost every trace of rational religion in the world.*

If then "the globe, wings, and serpent," was among the Egyptians the hieroglyphic of the Trinity, we must suppose that the priests acquired this doctrine from their intercourse with

the Israelites, rather than from any tradition of their ancestors. In this case, JOSEPH would be the Hermes Trismegistus, so lauded in Egyptian history, *(as Bryant, indeed, supposes he was.)* Joseph is said to have "taught" the Egyptian "senators *wisdom*[1]:" but *not*, I apprehend, in a *religious* sense. The edict of Pharaoh, to which this probably alludes, is of a political nature[2]. It would have been the extreme of indiscretion for Joseph to have attempted, without a divine command, to instruct the Egyptians in the mysteries of religion: and had such a command been issued, it would have been recorded by Moses. So far from the Egyptians having acquired religious instruction from the Israelites, every journey in the wilderness performed by the latter, proves that *they* learned *idolatry* from the Egyptians. "The golden calf" is a memorable instance, as copied from the rites of the sacred ox Apis.

Besides, it is more likely that Joseph, in his instructions on the mysteries of religion, would have begun with his own people, who seem not only to have been ignorant of the doctrine of the

[1] Psalm cv. [2] Gen. xli. 44.

TRINITY, but of every rational idea of the UNITY of God, when Moses was commissioned to lead them from Egypt. Of this we have abundant proof in the diffidence with which he accepted the commission [1].

So gross was their ignorance, and so deep-rooted their prejudices, that the doctrine of the Trinity was never, indeed, *fully* explained to them, even by Moses. He deemed it a doctrine too dangerous for their idolatrously inclined minds to bear, lest in their ardour for the Polytheism which it was his object to eradicate, they should separate the Unity, and dishonour the Trinity—lest in their proneness to worship the MANY, they should forget that "JEHOVAH their GOD is ONE JEHOVAH [2]."

I cannot therefore see that there is any conclusive testimony that the Egyptian hierogram of GLOBE, WINGS, and SERPENT, denoted the Trinity, in our sense of the term. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the definition of Hermes Trismegistus, adduced by Kircher, may not have been a "pious fraud" of some Egyptian Christian of the second or third century, whose imagi-

[1] See his conversation with God in Horeb, Exod. iii. 13.

[2] Deut. vi. 4.

nation seized upon this popular emblem as a fit instrument for inculcating the truth.

But, whatever may have been the origin or meaning of this hierogram, one thing is clear, that the SERPENT attached to it was a TYPE OF DIVINITY; and this is enough to support the theory of the present volume,—that The Serpent of Paradise was the SERPENT-GOD of the Gentiles.

III. HINDÛSTAN.—As *an emblem of divinity*, the serpent enters deeply into the religion of the Brahmins; and, from the popular superstitions of the present race of Hindûs, we may infer that he was at one time an object of religious worship. The well known reluctance of the natives of Hindûstan to kill a snake, cannot be referred entirely to the doctrine of transmigration of souls. In Forbes's "Oriental Memoirs," we read of certain gardeners in Guzerat who would never suffer the snakes to be molested, calling them "father," "brother," and other endearing names, and looking upon them as something divine. The head-gardener, however, "*paid them religious honours*[1]."

[1] This is one of numerous similar anecdotes recorded of the Hindûs by different writers.

Here we observe a mixture of the original serpent-worship, with the more modern doctrine of transmigration.

But a more tangible proof that ophiolatreia did indeed exist in Hindûstan in former times, is furnished in the following fact, noticed in Purchas's Pilgrims. A king of Calicut "built cottages" for *live serpents*, whom he tended with peculiar care, and made it a capital crime for any person in his dominions to destroy a snake. "*The natives looked upon serpents as endued with divine spirits*[1]."

From some such a notion may have been derived a custom which prevails in certain parts of Hindûstan to this day. The natives have a festival called "The Feast of the Serpents," at which every Hindû sets by a portion of his rice for the hooded snake on the outside of his house. By this offering he expects to propitiate those reptiles during the remainder of the year.

A further proof of the ancient prevalence of ophiolatreia in those countries, is afforded by the sculptures in the celebrated caverns of Salsette and Elephanta; where the deities either

[1] Purch. Pilg. part i. p. 565.

grasp serpents in their hands, or are enfolded by them. Serpents are also sculptured on the cornices surrounding the roofs of those caverns, and similarly delineated in the more modern pagodas[1]. The god Sani, of the Hindûs, is represented on a raven, and encircled by two serpents, whose heads meet over that of the god[2].

Maurice supposes that by the serpentine circle over Sani, who is the Saturn of the Hindûs, the *ring* of that planet is denoted. If so, the discoveries of modern astronomy are little more than revivals of the ancient philosophy. But whether Sani be *Saturn* or the *Sun*, he is equally illustrative of our theory—that serpents were early emblems of divinity in Hindûstan. As such we find them employed in the religious festivals of the Hindûs[3], symbolizing some of their most awful deities.

Boodh and Jeyne are both adorned with the same emblem. The statue of Jeyne, who is said to be the Indian Æculapius, is turbaned by a seven-headed snake: the rim of the pedestal is

[1] Maurice, Ind. Ant. ii. 192. [2] Ibid. iii. 203.
[3] Ibid. iii. 119.

embossed with serpents' heads. The same serpent also symbolizes Parus Nauth[1].

On a rock in the Ganges, in the province of Bahar, is a sculpture of Veshnu reposing on a coiled serpent, whose numerous folds are made to form a canopy over the sleeping god[2]. This serpent is fabled to have been the goddess Devi or Isi, who assumed the figure to carry Veshnu over the waters of the Deluge[3]. The sleep of Veshnu indicates the period between the two worlds. A similar sculpture is to be seen among the ruins of Mavalipuram, on the coast of Coromandel[4]. Veshnu himself is sometimes represented encompassed in the folds of a serpent; and Twashta, the great artificer of the universe, who corresponds in Hindû mythology with the Cneph or Ptha of the Egyptians, is supposed to have borne the form of a serpent[5]. Jagan-Nath (Juggernaut) is said to be sometimes worshipped under the form of a seven-headed dragon[6]. The Hindû Deonaush (the *Dionusus* of the Greeks,) was metamorphosed into a snake[7]: hence, pro-

[1] Francklin on the tenets of the Jeynes and Boodhists.

[2] Moor. Hindû Pantheon.

[3] Faber, Pag. Idol. i. 456.

[4] Asiat. Res. i. 150.

[5] Faber. P. I. i. 451.

[6] Faber. P. I. i. 452.

[7] Ibid. 453.

bably the prominent figure which the serpent bore in the mysteries of Bacchus.

Mahadeva (a name of Siva,) is sometimes represented with a snake entwined about his neck; one round his hair, and armlets of serpents upon both arms[1].

Bhairava (an Avatar of Siva,) sits upon the coils of a serpent, whose head rises above that of the god[2].

Parvati, the consort of Siva, is represented with snakes about her neck and waist[3].

Hence we perceive that the serpent was an emblem not confined to one god, but common to many. "The fifth day of the bright half of the month Sravana is also sacred to the demigods in the forms of serpents[4]."

This reptile, though the attribute of many of the Hindû deities, both benevolent and malignant, belonged more properly to the EVIL SPIRIT, of whom it is a sacred and terrific emblem. The king of the evil dæmons is called, in Hindû mythology, "the king of the *serpents*." His name is NAGA, and he is the prince of the Nagas, or

[1] Moor. Hind. Panth. plates 17, 18, 20.

[2] Ibid. pl. 47. [3] Ibid. pl. 27.

[4] Ibid. p. 22.

Naigs. "In which Sanscrit appellation," observes Maurice, "we plainly trace the Hebrew *nachash*, which is the very word for the particular serpentine tempter, and, in general, for all serpents throughout the Old Testament[1]." The Hindû Naraka, or *hell*, is fabled to consist of poisonous "snakes folded together in horrible contortions."

The malignant serpent Caliya, who was slain by Veshnu, (in his incarnation of Crishna), because he poisoned the air, and destroyed the herds on the banks of the Yamuna, was deified and worshipped by the Hindûs "in the same manner as Python was adored at Delphi[2]."

To the evil dæmon, in the form of a great serpent, the Hindûs attributed the guardianship of treasures. A remarkable instance of this superstition occurs in Forbes's Oriental Memoirs. Having once the curiosity to open a vault in a deserted tower, in which treasure was reported to be concealed, under the guardianship of a dæmon in the form of a snake, he prevailed, with much difficulty, upon two men to descend; when, in strict accordance with the popular

[1] Maurice, Hist. of Hindostan, i. 343.

[2] Asiat. Res. viii. 65.

belief, they found a large serpent in a torpid state. The two men were drawn up, and the reptile destroyed by fire; but nothing could induce the natives again to enter a place, which they now regarded more than ever as the residence of the evil spirit.

In Hindûstan prevailed, also, the general opinion which accompanied ophiolatreia in all its progress—that the serpent was of a *prophetic nature*[1].

The decay of ophiolatreia in Hindûstan may be readily accounted for by the exterminating religious wars which so long raged between the followers of Crishna and Budha. Budha was *the serpent* who carried off Ella the daughter of Ichswaca, the son of Manu—and hence the animosity against him. The children (i. e. the worshippers) of Budha, were the real Hindûs, and preserved the ophite sign of their race. They were distinguished by the banner of the serpent. The worshippers of Crishna adopted the *eagle*.

The worshippers of Crishna, Budha, and Surya (*the sun*) form the three idolatrous classes of India from the Ganges to the Caspian sea.

[1] Maurice, Hist. of Hindostan, v. 343.

The children of Surya joined with those of Crishna against the Budhists, and at length almost exterminated the race. The Mahabharat records constant wars from "*ancient* times" between the worshippers of the Sun and the *Tak* or *Takshac* races. The word *Takshac* is frequently rendered "*snake*:" but *Tak* is the name of a mountain in the range west of India, and *Hak* was the word which designated a *serpent*. Alexander's ally Taxiles was doubtless an Ophite chief of this country, for he took him to see an enormous dragon, the object of worship among his subjects[1]. The name *Taxiles* was probably titular, since he was called *Onuphis* until his father's death. He was then the priest and king of the Ophites of Tak, and from that very circumstance called *Onuphis* by the Greeks, who had acquired the knowledge of this title from their intercourse with Egypt, and her priesthood of On and Oph[2].

Pursuing our inquiries, we find that ophiolatreia prevailed to an equal extent in Cachmere, where there were no less than *seven hundred*

[1] Quintus Curtius, lib. viii. c. 12.

[2] For the above valuable facts, I am indebted to the elegant work of Col. Tod, on the Antiquities and Annals of Rajahstan.

places in which carved images of serpents were worshipped [1]. And even in Tibet may be often seen, the great Chinese dragon ornamenting the temples of the Grand Lama [2]. But the chief seats of ophiolatreia in this quarter of the modern world were in China and Japan.

IV. CEYLON.—The religion of the natives of Ceylon is the Boodh, which is a corruption of the ancient ophiolatreia. "The Singalese," says Dr. Davy [3], "in general rather venerate than dread the hooded snake. They conceive that *it belongs to another world*, and that when it appears in this is only a visitor. They imagine that it possesses great power, and is somewhat *akin to the gods, and superior to man*. In consequence they superstitiously refrain from killing it." This is the snake made use of by the serpent charmers. Its image is also seen round the necks of some of the gods. The mythological history of this serpent is curious. They live in the world of spirits in a place peculiarly devoted to themselves, and are said to have a faculty of locomotion, and a splendour of appearance like the gods.

[1] Maur. Hist. Hind. i. 291. [2] Embassy to Tibet.

[3] Account of Ceylon, p. 83.

Nevertheless, they are supposed to have been once human beings, who forfeited their estate by indulging the sin of *malice*.

V. CHINA AND JAPAN.—The great Chinese DRAGON, so conspicuous in every public and private edifice, was the symbolical serpent of ancient mythology, under a more fanciful and poetic form. "It was the genial banner of the empire, and indicated every thing that was sacred in it[1]." "It was not only the stamp and symbol of royalty, but is sculptured in all the temples, blazoned on the furniture of the houses, and interwoven with the vestments[2]" of the chief nobility. The emperor bears a dragon as his armorial device; and the same figure is engraved on his sceptre and diadem, as well as on all the vases of the imperial palace.

The DRAGON is also mixed up with many of their religious legends. The Chinese believe that "there is a dragon of extraordinary strength and sovereign power, *which is in heaven, in the air, on the waters, and on the mountains*[3]." A property so divine must have originated in the

[1] Stukeley, Abury, 56. [2] Maur. Hist. Hind. i. 210.
[3] Lecompte, China, 94.

attribution of this sacred animal to the Creator of the universe. For though it might apply partly to the spiritual presence of the evil one, yet in China this religious emblem belonged rather to the Agathodæmon. At the sacred washing of Confucius, soon after his birth, two dragons were fabled to have attended [1], to intimate probably that the young philosopher was, in an especial manner, under the protection of the deity [2].

Father Martin, one of the Jesuits who obtained a settlement in China, says, that "the Chinese delight in mountains and high places, because there lives the dragon upon whom their good fortune depends. They call him 'the Father of happiness.' To this dragon they erect temples shaded with groves [3]."

Here we perceive the union of two primeval

[1] Kœmpfer, Japan, 246.

[2] A somewhat similar story is told by Pindar, *Olymp.* 6, of Iamus, the son of Apollo and Evadne: though in this case the two serpents, *sent by the gods*, fed the foundling with wild honey.

——— δύο δὲ γλαυκῶπες αὐτὸν
Δαιμόνων βουλαῖσιν ἐ-
θρέψαντο δράκοντες.

[3] Cambry Monumens Celtiques. 163.

superstitions, *Serpent-worship* and *Grove-worship*, each of them commemorative of the Fall in Paradise.

The Chinese god, Fohi, is said to have had the form of a man, terminating in the tail of a *snake*: which is not only a proof of the early existence of serpent-worship in China, but also shows that the *dragon* and the *snake* of Chinese mythology were cognate. Such a form, also, had the Athenian Cecrops and Erectheus, and the Egyptian Typhon [1].

There was a remarkable superstition in regard to *a serpent of enormous bulk which girded the world*, current in the mythology of almost every nation where ophiolatreia prevailed: nor was China exempt from the general credulity. This idea, perhaps, originated in the early consecration of the serpent to the sun: and the subsequent conversion of a *serpent biting his tail*, into an emblem of the Sun's path. This hierogram was again considered as typical of *eternity*, partly from the serpent being a symbol of *Deity;* partly from the *perfect* figure of a *circle* thus formed, without beginning or end; and partly from an opinion of the eternity of matter.

[1] Vide *infra*. "Serpent-worship in Greece and Egypt."

In countries where the TWO PRINCIPLES were represented by two serpents, instead of the ecliptic, *the solstitial colures* were described under these symbols. Thus, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, two serpents intersecting each other at right angles, upon a globe, denoted the *earth*. These rectangular intersections were at the solstitial points [1].

The genius of superstition soon resolved the imaginary into real serpents; of which metamorphosis we have an instance in the fictions of the Chinese, who are said to be "superstitious in choosing a plot of ground to erect a dwelling-house or sepulchre: conferring it with the *head, tail, and feet of divers dragons* which live under our earth, whence depends all good or bad fortunes [2]."

The same poetical fiction was current in Hindûstan, where there is a tradition that the founder of Delhi, when about to lay the foundation of that city, was told by a Brahmin, that "provided he placed the seat of his government *on the head of the serpent that supports the world* his throne and kingdom would last for ever [3]."

[1] Jablonski, Panth. Æg. lib. i. c. 4.

[2] Purchas. Pilg. part iii. p. 395.

[3] "Tour through the Upper Provinces," p. 166.

In Hindû mythology, the serpent Asootee enfolds the globe [1]; and on every eclipse the Hindûs believe that the sun or moon is seized by a large serpent or dragon. The same notion obtains in China [2]. This is the imaginary serpent of the constellation Draco, and the superstition may be a remnant of the tradition of "the war in heaven, when Michael, and his angels fought against the dragon [3]." The *dragon* and the *serpent* are the fifth and sixth signs of the Chinese Zodiac.

The superstition of JAPAN was in every respect similar to that of China. The DRAGON was held in equal veneration in both countries. "The chronicles and histories of the gods and heroes of Japan are full of fabulous stories of this animal. They believe that it dwells at the bottom of the sea [4], as its proper element. They represent it in their books as a huge, long, four-footed snake..... Some of the Japanese emperor's cloth, his arms, scimetars, knives, and the like;

[1] Maur. Ind. Ant. ii. 192.

[2] Maur. Ind. Ant. 194, 195.

[3] Rev. xii. 7.

[4] A similar notion prevailed in the Mythology of Scandinavia. See *infra*, c. 3.

as also the furniture and hangings of the imperial palace, are adorned with figures of this dragon [1]." The Japanese soldiers eat the flesh of the serpent called Fitakutz, "believing firmly that it has the virtue of making them bold and courageous [2]."

There is reason to believe that temple-worship was formerly paid to the dragon in Japan. Kœmpfer being once on a journey, a temple was pointed out to him which, his guides said, had been erected in memory of a victory gained on the shores of the lake Oitz, by a famous dragon over a scolopendra [3].

VI. Burmah.—The neighbouring countries of Siam and Burmah, partaking with the Chinese in the religion of Budh, partook with them also in the adoration of the serpent: such, at least, was the case in former times.

I have a Burmese illuminated manuscript in my possession, exhibiting, apparently in the successive order of events, the life of some deity —probably Guadma. One of the first pictures in the series represents this good genius attacked by the evil spirit. The next compartment pre-

[1] Kœmpfer, Japan, 124. [2] Ibid. 128.

[3] Ibid. 491.

sents two men with a basket hanging from a pole between them, and proceeding through a wood, as if on an important errand. We see the same men, with the same basket, in the next picture. It is now deposited on the ground, and the two bearers upon their knees, in the attitude of supplication, before *an enormous dragon enveloped in flames!* On a mound before him are *two trees;* and the votaries hold up each a *bough* in his hand.

Adoration is, unquestionably, intended in this representation: and, reasoning from the connection of this picture with the preceding, which describes the assault of the evil spirit upon the *passive* and *praying* image of the good dæmon, we cannot be charged with extraordinary credulity if we refer the whole to some dark tradition respecting the events in Paradise.

The attitude of the two worshippers of the dragon, and the boughs in their hands, illustrate the scene in the beginning of the Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, where the attendants of the priest of Thebes appear, ἱκτηρίοις κλάδοισιν ἐξεστεμμένοι, with the *boughs of supplication* in their hands. The scene is at Thebes, an ophite city.

VII. JAVA.—A worship compounded of the Brahminical and Budh superstitions, prevailed originally in Java. Sir Stamford Raffles, in exploring the ruined temples, found many images which were adorned with the sacred serpent. Gigantic figures, placed at the portals, were armed with a club in one hand, and a writhing snake in the other. Small twisted snakes also formed their armlets; and one, passing diagonally across the body, represented a belt[1]. In the temple of Kedal is an idol, on one side of which are three serpents of an enormous magnitude, intertwining over the head of the image. A female figure, with a serpent also, reclines over it[2].

Over the portal of the great temple of Chandi Sewu is "a very large and terrible *gorgon visage*[3]." These gorgon visages are not uncommon, and are probably a form of the ophite hierogram, denoting *consecration*, such as we see over the portals of some of the Egyptian temples.

All the Javanese temples are *pyramidal:* which is a figure dedicated to the solar deity: and the

[1] Java, i. 9, 10. 15. 17. [2] Ibid. 47.

[3] Ibid. 21, 22.

same gorgon visages, as emblems of consecration, appear over the niches which contain the images.

The *symbolical* serpent, at least, was therefore once worshipped in Java.

VIII. ARABIA.—Returning towards the centre and source of ophiolatreia, we arrive in Arabia: and here also are traces, though almost obliterated, of the ancient serpent-worship. Of the Caaba of Mecca, as connected with this idolatry, we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. But in this place we may observe, that the language of the country retains an expression of its original religion, which is not a little remarkable. The same word is employed to denote both "*adoration*" and "*the serpent;*" from whence Dickinson infers, that "*the Arabians formerly worshipped serpents*[1]."

We may observe, also, that Philostratus[2] attributes the same superstitious practice, with the same views, to the natives of Arabia and Hindûstan: viz. *that* of "eating the heart and liver of serpents, for the purpose of acquiring a know-

[1] Delph. Phœn. c. 2. p. 10.

[2] De Vitâ Apollonii, lib. i. c. 14, and lib. iii. c. 3.

ledge of *the thoughts and languages of animals.*" This notion, perhaps, originated in the traditionary account of the PROPHETIC SERPENT, the memory of whose oracle is so strongly impressed upon the page of antiquity.

IX. SYRIA.—From Arabia we pass into the Land of Canaan, for so many ages the theatre upon which truth and superstition contended for the ascendancy. The country which we include under the general name of SYRIA extends from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean sea, on one side; and from Mount Taurus to Arabia, on the other. It includes, therefore, the whole of Phœnicia and Palestine, the territories of Damascus, and the possessions of Solomon.

The Phœnicians, according to Sanchoniathon, cited by Eusebius[1], were among the earliest of the nations that embraced ophiolatreia; and the author of this idolatry is said to have been TAAUTUS. Sanchoniathon calls him "a God[2]," and says, that he first made an image of Cœlus, and afterwards of Saturn; and then invented hieroglyphics[3]. He is supposed to be the same

[1] Præp. Evang. 40. [2] Ibid. 39.

[3] Στοιχείων. See Warburton *Div. Leg. of Moses*, iii. 213.

as the Hermes Trismegistus of Egypt, where he was called Thoth, and deified. The words of Sanchoniathon are the following: "Taautus *consecrated the species of dragons and serpents; and the Phœnicians and Egyptians followed him in this superstition.*"

Hence we may infer, that Taautus was the first person who introduced into Phœnicia both *zabaism* and *serpent-worship*. For such must be the meaning of the expressions that he was "the first who made an image of CŒLUS,"—that is, represented "the heavenly host" by visible symbols, and "*consecrated* DRAGONS and SERPENTS."

The UNION of these two superstitions, intimated by the attribution of them to the *same* inventor, proves the origin of the serpent-worship to be co-ordinate with that of the sun, or of the celestial bodies. From which we may argue, that Taautus was the leader of the first colony after the flood which settled in Phœnicia; out of which he may have passed easily into Egypt, if we take the word Phœnicia in its most extended sense, as including the whole land of Canaan. There is then no difficulty in conceiving that the Phœnician TAUT and the Egyptian THOTH were the

same person. The intimate connexion of the latter with the serpent-worship of Egypt we shall observe in the sequel.

The prevalence of ophiolatreia in the land of Canaan, is therefore directly shown upon historical testimony: it is proved, collaterally, by the traditions of the country, and the remains of serpent-worship which was occasionally visible in the sacred and classical writings. The name of the sacred serpent, according to Bryant[1], (who has taken great pains to arrive at accuracy in this statement,) was in the ancient language of Canaan, variously pronounced Aub, Ab; Oub, Ob; Oph, Op; Eph, Ev ..... all referrible to the original אוב, or אב; which being derived from אב (*inflare*), was, perhaps, applied to the serpent from his peculiarity of *inflation* when irritated.

The first oracle mentioned in history was dedicated to the serpent-god, who was known in Canaan by the name of Ob, or Aub: hence arose the notion that the oracular response of the priestess of these serpent temples must be always preceded by a mysterious *inflation*, as if actuated by the internal presence of the divine

[1] Ant. Myth. i. 58 *et passim.*

Spirit. Thus Virgil describes the Pythian priestess—

> ——— Ait, "Deus, ecce Deus!" cui talia fanti
> ——————————— pectus *anhelum*,
> Et rabie fera corda *tument*, majorque videri,
> Nec mortale sonans: *adflata est* Numine quando
> Jam propiore Dei.
>
> *Æneid.* vi. 46, &c.

The whole of this notion of *necessary inflation* was taken up by the Greeks, from mistaking the word OB, (the *name* of the Deity,) for the word OB, that property of *inflation*, from whence the name was derived: OB signifying both the *serpent*, and his property of *inflation*[1].

The first mention of the God OB occurs in the Scriptures. Moses refers to his oracle, when he commands every AUB, AB, or OB, to be put to death:

"A man also, or woman, that hath *a familiar spirit*, (אוב,) shall surely be put to death." (Levit. xx. 27. Deut. xviii. 11.)

The word אוב is translated by the Septuagint, *ventriloquist,—one that speaks from his belly*. This is the Greek notion of *inflation*, adopted by the

[1] OB is the same as AB, with a prolonged pronunciation.

Septuagint in accommodation to the received opinions respecting the Pythian priestess. The English version "*who hath a familiar spirit*," is too indefinite; and the septuagint, "*who is a ventriloquist*," too paraphrastic, to express the meaning of Moses. We must therefore look for another. In doing so, we may remark, that it was not an unusual custom of the Gentiles for the priest or priestess of any God to take the name of the deity they served. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus calls the priest of Cnuphis in Egypt, SECNUPHIS. This was the priest with whom Plato conversed [1], and his god was the same as the OB of Canaan; that is, the SERPENT-GOD of the country. We read also of OINUPHIS, a priest of Heliopolis, from whom Pythagoras is said to have learned astronomy [2]. Heliopolis, "the city of the SUN," was called in Egypt ON, which was a title of the solar deity. OINUPHIS therefore, (or rather ONUPHIS,) was the solar deity ON, symbolized by the sacred serpent OPH. In this case therefore, as in the former, the priest assumed the cognomen of his God. Again, Eudoxus was taught astronomy by another priest

[1] Jablonski Pantheon. Ægypt. lib. i. c. 4. s. 11.

[2] Plutarch. De Iside et Osiride 632. Edit. Steph.

of Heliopolis, whose name was CONUPHIS, or C'NUPHIS [1].

For these examples I am indebted to Jablonski, who says that SECNUPHIS means literally SE-ICH-CNUPHIS, "*the servant of the god Cnuphis.*"

In like manner we find that the priestess of DELPHI was called PYTHIA, from her deity PYTHON: and the Druid who was the minister of the British god HU, was called "an ADDER;" because *adders* were symbolical of the god whom he served, whose chief title was "HU, the DRAGON-RULER of the world [2]."

It is a curious coincidence, that as the witch of Endor is called *oub*, and the African sorceress *obi*, from the serpent deity OUB; so the old English name of a witch, *hag*, bears apparent relationship to the word *hak*, the ancient British name of a species of snake.

These examples I have taken, exclusively, from the worshippers of the SERPENT-GOD in Egypt, Greece, and Britain, among whom the custom seems to have been more prevalent than among the votaries of the other heathen deities. To these we may add the example of the em-

[1] Clem. Alex. Strom. 1. p. 303.

[2] Davies. Myth. of Druids, 122.

peror Elagabalus assuming the name of the Syrian god of Emesa, at whose shrine he officiated before he was invested with the Roman purple. We shall find in the sequel, that this deity was identical, or nearly so, with the deity whose worship we are now investigating. The difference being, that OB was simply *the serpent-god;* whereas ELAGABALUS was *the solar deity symbolized by the serpent.*

From these parallels we may infer, that the priest or priestess of OB, in Canaan, assumed the appellation of the deity whom they served.

We may therefore render *Levit.* xx. 27—"A man also, or woman among you, *who is an* OB, (*i. e.* a priest or priestess of OB,) shall be surely put to death:" and similarly in *Deut.* xviii. 11. the expression, "a consulter with familiar spirits," may be rendered "a consulter of *the priests of* OB."

Again, the woman of Endor, to whom Saul applied for an oracle, is called בעלת־אוב; the literal meaning of which is "*one that hath* OB," which is synonymous with "*a priestess of* OB."

The serpent OB, thus worshipped in Canaan as oracular, was called, "THE GOOD DÆMON," as we learn from Eusebius, citing Sanchonia-

thon—"The Phœnicians called this animal (*the sacred serpent*) AGATHODÆMON: the Egyptians likewise called him CNEPH, and added to him the head of a hawk, because of its activity[1]."

The title OB, or AB, was frequently compounded with ON, a name of the SUN, because the serpent was considered symbolical of that deity. This symbolical worship was of very ancient date in Phœnicia, as we learn from Sanchoniathon[2], who tells us, "The son of THABION was *the first hierophant* of Phœnicia."

Prophets and priests are frequently called in mythology the *sons* of the God whom they worshipped. The *son* of Thabion, therefore, was the *priest* of Thabion. Now *Thabion* is a compound word, TH'-AB-ION: of which the initial letters "TH'" signify "God." They are an abbreviation of the word "THEUTH," "from which the Greeks formed ΘΕΟΣ, which with that nation was the most general name of the Deity[3]." "THABION," therefore implies, "THE GOD ABION,"—the SERPENT-SOLAR GOD.

The primitive serpent-worshippers of Canaan

[1] Præp. Evang. lib. i. 41 [2] Ibid .iv. 39.

[3] Bryant. Anal. I. 13.

against whom Moses cautioned the children of Israel, were the HIVITES. This word, according to Bochart[1], is derived from *Hhivia*, a serpent: the root of which is *Eph* or *Ev*—one of the variations of the original *Aub*. EPHITES or EVITES, being aspirated, would become HEVITES or HIVITES—whence comes the word OPHITES, by which the Greek historians designated the worshippers of the serpent. The Greek word Οφις, *a serpent*, is derived from *Oph*, the Egyptian name for that reptile[2]; the same as *Eph*. The Hivites who were left "to prove Israel[3]," inhabited Mount Lebanon, "from Mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath." The children of Israel intermarried with them, "and *served their gods*." These were called BAALIM, which being in the plural number, may mean the god BAAL or BEL, under *different* forms of worship; of which that of the *serpent* was one; as we have seen under the article "Ophiolatreia in Babylon."

The extent to which this worship prevailed, may be estimated by the fact of its surviving to the time of Hezekiah, when the Jews "burned

[1] Geog. Sacr. [2] Bryant. Anal. ii. 199.

[3] Judges iii. 3.

incense" to the brazen serpent which had been laid up among the sacred relics, as a memorial of their deliverance from the serpents in the wilderness. Hezekiah "removed the high places, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for UNTO THOSE DAYS the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehustan[1],"—*i. e. a piece of brass*, by way of contempt.

But the worship of the serpent was not so easily suppressed in Canaan. The Jewish polity being broken up, the lurking ophites crept out of their obscurity; and in the second century brought dishonour on the Christian religion, by claiming an affinity of faith with the worshippers of JESUS.

These Christian heretics were exposed by Epiphanius[2], under the name of Ὀφῖται. Clemens Alexandrinus also mentions them; and Tertullian describes their tenets—"Accesserunt his hæretici etiam qui ophitæ nuncupantur: nam serpentem magnificant in tantum ut illum etiam ipsi Christo præferant. Ipse enim, inquiunt, scientiæ nobis boni et mali originem dedit.

[1] 2 Kings xviii. 4.

[2] Hæres. xxxvii. p. 267.

Hujus animadvertens potentiam et majestatem, Moyses æreum posuit serpentem, et quicunque in eum aspexerunt, sanitatem consecuti sunt. Ipse, aiunt, præterea, in Evangelio *imitatur* serpentis ipsius sacram potestatem dicendo, ' et sicut Moyses exaltavit serpentem in deserto, ita exaltari oportet Filium Hominis.' Ipsum introducunt ad benedicenda Eucharistia[1]."

A more ingenious perversion of Scripture than the foregoing, may scarcely be found in the annals of heresy.

Epiphanius says, that "the Ophites sprung out of the Nicolaitans and Gnostics, and were so called from the *serpent* which they worshipped." The Gnostics, he informs us in another place[2], "taught that the ruler of this world was of *a dracontic form.*" "The Ophites," he observes, "attribute all wisdom to the serpent of paradise, and say that he was the author of knowledge to men." "They keep a live serpent in a chest; and at the time of the mysteries entice him out by placing bread before him upon a table. Opening his door he comes out,

[1] De Præscript. Hæret. c. xlvii. p. 221. Cited by Bryant, Anal. ii. 218.

[2] P. 91.

and having ascended the table, folds himself about the bread. This they call *a perfect sacrifice*. They not only break and distribute this among the votaries, but whosoever will, *may kiss the serpent*[1]. This the wretched people call THE EUCHARIST. They conclude the mysteries by *singing an hymn* THROUGH HIM to the supreme Father[2].

The above account of Epiphanius forcibly reminds us of the mysteries of Bacchus, in which serpents were carried in *covered baskets;* and in which *cakes* and *new bread* were given to the votaries. Demosthenes, in one of his most splendid passages of sarcasm, describes his antagonist Æschines under the ludicrous character of a Bacchans, "pressing tight in his hands the Parian serpents, and brandishing them over his head, and shouting 'Euoi, Saboi!' dancing meantime, and crying 'Hyes Attes!' 'Attes Hyes!'" He calls him, contemptuously, "a chief leader" of the mysteries, and *chest-bearer*, that is, carrying the *snake-basket*. For which

[1] It was a common practice of the Heathen to *kiss* their idols.

[2] Epiph. lib. i. tom. 3. p. 268, &c.

extravagancies he receives his reward in "CAKES and NEW BREAD[1]."

In the Bacchanalian Mysteries, also, there was a consecrated cup of wine, handed round after supper, called "the cup of the Agathodæmon:" which was received with much shouting[2]. The Christian Ophites, therefore, preserving the memory of their Bacchanalian orgies, would naturally confound the observances of the Lord's Supper with the practices incident to their heathen festival. The hymn with which they concluded their idolatrous ceremonies, addressed *through the serpent* to the Supreme Father, is a memorial of *the hymn sung to Python* on every *seventh day* at Delphi[3].

These opinions of the Gnostic Ophites were blended with the old Magian superstition of Persia by Manes, a celebrated heretic of the third century; who revived ophiolatreia, in his native country, under the name of Christianity. He taught, that "Christ was an incarnation of the great serpent, who glided over the cradle of

[1] Demosth. pro Corona, s. 79.

[2] Nicola: de ritu Bacch. apud Gronov. vii. 186.

[3] Prolegomena to the Pythia, of Pindar, cited by Bryant, Anal. ii. 147.

the Virgin Mary, when she was asleep, at the age of a year and a half[1]."

Traces of ophiolatreia are visible in the neighbourhood of Damascus, where there were two ophite temples, converted, with the usual licence of poets, into "*dragons*[2]."

The whole region of TRACHONITIS is supposed by Bryant to have received its name from the worship of the DRAGON, so common in those parts. The mistake of Τραχων for Δρακων is easy.

The subject of ophite temples is so full of curious information, that I shall reserve what I have gleaned upon it for a separate chapter. We may remark, however, in this place, that there is reason for supposing that the celebrated grove of Daphne, near Antioch, was *(at least in part)* devoted to the mysteries of the serpent. Its consecration to Apollo, the solar god of antiquity, who united in his rites the worship of the serpent, gives countenance to this opinion; but the corroboration is derived from a remarkable legend preserved in Strabo. It is said that the Macedonian kings of Syria first established the oracles,

[1] Faber. Pag. Idol. ii. 433. citing Asiat. Res. vol. x.

[2] Bryant, Anal. ii. 142.

and planted the grove of Daphne[1]; but the legend in question would argue for that secluded and voluptuous sanctuary a much higher antiquity. The Macedonian kings, in all probability, patronized the ancient GROVE-WORSHIP mentioned in Judges iii. 7, in connexion with the service of BAALIM, into which the children of Israel were seduced by the Hivites. The legend of Strabo informs us that the original name of the river Orontes was TYPHON; for there the serpent Typhon being struck by the lightning of Jupiter, in escaping *cut the earth with his body* as he writhed along; and springs of water issuing from the ground, formed the river, which, after him, was called Typhon[2].

Had ophiolatreia never existed in Daphne, such a legend as this would hardly have been recorded of the river which flowed by it. At Daphne there was a temple of Apollo, and a grove sacred to Diana; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that in almost every place where there was either, some legend of a serpent generally prevailed.

The serpent-worship of Syria is strongly

[1] Gibbon, Dec. and Fall of Rom. Emp. iv. 113.

[2] Strabo, lib. xvi. 750.

marked in the religion of the people of Tyre. The Phœnicians of Tyre consecrated an image of the serpent, and suspended it in their temples, encircling in its folds the Mundane egg[1], the symbol of the universe. THE SERPENT denoted the Supreme Being, in his character of the vivifying principle. Macrobius informs us, that the Phœnicians worshipped Janus under the figure of a serpent, forming a circle, with his tail in his mouth; typifying the self-existence and eternity of the world[2].

The serpent was deemed particularly sacred to Æsculapius; and in his temples live serpents were kept for the purposes of adoration. There was a grove of Æsculapius near Sidon, on the banks of the Tamyras[3]. From which we may infer that here also were kept live serpents, and worshipped.

The emperor Elagabalus was high priest of the god of that name, who had a temple at Emesa. "He imported into Rome *small serpents* of the Egyptian breed, which were called in that country *Agathodæmons:*" these he wor-

[1] Plate in Maurice and Bryant.

[2] Lib. i. c. 9.

[3] Strabo, 756.

shipped [1]. Hence we may infer that this young emperor had been educated in the mysteries of ophiolatreia; an inference which is strengthened by the decomposition of his name, or rather that of his god.

Elagabal is perhaps EL-OG-OB-EL; that is, "the god OG, the serpent-god [2]." This was the deity whose worship was conveyed into western Europe, under the title of OGHAM or OGMIUS, by the Phœnician mariners, and established in Gaul and Ireland, as we shall see in the chapters which treat of serpent-worship in those countries. He was a compound character between Hercules and Mercury, bearing as his symbol the club of the former, surmounted by the *caduceus* of the latter.

The first mention of this name in history is in the Scriptures, where it appears as the cognomen of the celebrated king of Bashan, overthrown by Joshua. He reigned over the territory of Argob [3], which was afterwards called by the Greeks, Trachonitis. *Trachonitis* we have

[1] Lampridius, cited by Jablonski Panth. Ægypt. 89.

[2] OBEL is probably the same as BEL—the great god of the Babylonians.

[3] Deut. iii. 4.

already resolved into the "country of the *dragon:*" and the propriety of this resolution will appear from decomposing the word Argob into its component parts, AUR-OG-OB; of which the first signifies *light;* the second is the name of the deity; the third that of his symbol, *the serpent.* Faber thinks that OG is the DELUGE deified; whence is derived OC and OCEANUS. This, I believe is the general opinion. But whoever OG may have been, the word *Argob* is his title; and this title bears allusion to the solar deity AUR, and the serpent-deity AUB. And "the region of Argob" in his holy land. Upon this hypothesis the king of Bashan (OG) would be hierarch and king of Argob, assuming the name of his tutelar god—

"REX ANIUS, rex idem hominum, PHŒBIQUE sacerdos."

Sandford, Dickinson, Vossius, and Gale, concur in identifying "OG, king of Bashan," with the Typhon or Python of mythology [1]. I cannot say that the same arguments which weighed with these learned men have brought me to the same conclusion; but this much cannot, I think, be denied, that there is a *strong connexion* between

[1] See Gale. *Court of Gentiles,* v. i. b. ii. 58.

THE WORSHIP OF OG, and OPHIOLATREIA. Beyond this, I would not desire to press the argument—but up to this point I would urge it. For even upon the supposition of OG being the deluge, the serpent would be his emblem; being in this character considered in all mythology—Asiatic, Egyptian, or Scandinavian. Elagabalus, therefore, was probably the same at Emesa, as OG, the king of Bashan, in Argob—the royal priest of the SERPENT SOLAR GOD.

But the serpent-worship of Syria, has left stronger records of its original prevalence than verbal coincidences. The coins of the Tyrians, as engraved in Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. 6, bear testimony to the existence and prevalence of this superstition in Phœnicia, in characters which it is impossible to mistake. It is true that these medals are of comparatively recent date, the oldest of them being posterior to Alexander the Great: but still they recognise the local superstition of that æra; and we know that the local religions of the Asiatics were rarely susceptible of innovation. Besides, we have already possessed ourselves of data which identify ophiolatreia as indigenous in the land of Canaan.

The following is a description of these interesting medals.

No. 1 represents a TREE between two rude stones, which are erect: round the trunk of the tree is coiled a SERPENT. At the lower part of the medal, in one corner, is an altar, denoting that the medal is descriptive of *religious rites.* The two rude stones are the *Petræ Ambrosiæ*, so well known to antiquaries, and of the kind of which the Celtic temples were composed. The two stones here are intended, doubtless, as a representation of an Ophite temple.

No. 2 represents a burning altar. Two serpents are rising from the two front angles of the base. On the left, is the celebrated caduceus, without wings.

No. 3 exhibits a naked man standing between two serpents, which are erect upon one coil, and turning from him. This is a medal of Berytus—the rest are Tyrian.

No. 4 represents the Tyrian Hercules *(Ogmius)* contending with a serpent. The man has a large stone in his right hand, and is in the act of throwing it. The serpent is erect upon one coil. Behind the man is a sea shell, denoting Tyre.

No. 5 presents us with a very large *Petra Ambrosia*, round which is entwined a large serpent in a defensive posture. On the right is a sea shell, on the left a palm tree.

No. 6 represents an altar with a burning sacrifice. In front is a serpent with a radiated head, gazing upon the altar.

Besides these medals, there is a Tyrian coin engraved in Bryant's Analysis, plate 7. vol. iii. In this we observe a tree between two *Petræ Ambrosiæ*. A serpent is twined about the trunk of a tree. At the base of the coin is a sea shell and a wolf, emblems of Tyre.

The serpent-worship of Phœnicia, thus clearly proved, is further illustrated by the very accurate tradition of the rebellion and fall of Satan from heaven, preserved in the legend of OPHIONEUS. OPHIONEUS was a giant who headed an insurrection in heaven, against the gods, and being overcome, was cast down to earth. The name of this celestial rebel is compounded of OPH and ON. It was the name of the SERPENT SOLAR GOD, who united in his mysteries the two ancient superstitions of Zabaism and Ophiolatreia. The *celestial origin* of Satan is preserved in the termination of his name, ON; while his *Paradisiacal*

incarnation is intimated in the first syllable, OPH. This deity was probably the THABION of whom we spoke above.

So accurately did the legend of Ophioneus coincide with the history of Satan, that CELSUS, the champion of Paganism, adduced it is a proof that the account of Moses was borrowed from the fables of the heathens. An accusation which is triumphantly answered by ORIGEN[1], who charges his opponent with gross ignorance of antiquity, in supposing the fables of his own corrupt mythology to be more ancient than the writings of Moses.

X. ASIA MINOR.—So universal was ophiolatreia in this part of the Roman empire, that "a female figure, *holding a serpent in her right hand*, and in her left the rostrum of a ship," was the symbol of Asia[2]. But the provinces of Asia Minor, which exhibited the strongest and most unquestionable vestiges of serpent-worship, were Phrygia and Troas.

At Hierapolis, in Phrygia, a living serpent of

[1] Cited by Stillingfleet. Orig. Sac. book iii. c. 3. s. 18.

[2] Beger *de Num. Creten. Serpentif.* 8.

great size was kept and worshipped, when Philip the Apostle converted the inhabitants to Christianity. The tradition is, that he destroyed this animal by his prayers[1]; and the people overpowered by the miracle, embraced the Gospel.

As a "genius loci," the serpent entered deeply into the religion of the Phrygians. An example of this may be seen in the fifth Æneid of Virgil, in the sacrifices of Æneas at the tomb of Anchises.

The libations of *wine*, *new milk*, and *sacred blood*, having been poured out, the pious son proceeds with reverential feeling, to address the departed spirit of his father: but the scarcely-commenced requiem is interrupted by a phenomenon, which fills him, at first, with unmixed astonishment, and then overwhelms him with religious awe. *A large and beautiful serpent* glides from the tumulus—ascends the altars—consumes the offerings—and returns to his abode. The Trojan, upon recovering his self-possession, immediately concludes that this beautiful and mysterious visitant must either be the tutelary

[1] Nelson, Fasts and Festivals.

deity of the place, or the attendant minister of his father's soul :—

Incertus GENIUM ne LOCI, *famulum* ve *parentis*.

Under either possibility, he hesitates not to offer to the holy being the tribute of adoration. Two sheep, two sows, and two bullocks, attest his piety with their sacrificial blood.

That the Phrygians were Ophites is to be inferred from the device upon the shield of Hector, as represented on the Canino vases [1]. The vase No. MCXII. discovers Hector setting out to fight with Achilles. He bears a *serpent* upon his shield. He is again represented with the same device on another vase.

As a "genius loci," however, the serpent was not confined to Phrygia and Troas. It was, in this character, stamped upon the coins and medals of many towns of Asia Minor. *Cyzicum*, *Pergamus*, *Marcianopolis*, in Mysia; *Aboniteichos* and *Amastris* in Paphlagonia; *Nice* and *Nicomedia* in Bithynia; *Tomos* and *Dionysopolis* in Pontus; and *Mindus* in Caria, exhibit as their ensign the sacred serpent [2]. On the medals of Troas, Nicomedia, Amastris, and Mindus,

[1] Archæol. vol. xxiii.

[2] See Spanheim, 212, &c.

the serpent is seen encircling a prophetic tripod; on which Spanheim remarks, that "serpents were not only the common symbols of the Pythian worship, but also the *domestic prophets* of these places."

Other traces of ophiolatreia may be recognised in the *names* of many places in Asia Minor. As in the names of the ancient cities may be frequently discovered those of the gods to whose worship they were peculiarly devoted: and as the title of the sacred serpent (AB, or PETHEN) is frequently involved in the local designations of Asia Minor, Bryant concluded that the superstition of ophiolatreia must have generally prevailed through this idolatrous region. An island of the Propontis was called *Ophiusa:* this name was common to many islands and places, and denoted, according to Bryant, their former addiction to the worship of the serpent OPH. In the present case, this hypothesis may seem to be corroborated by the fact, that on the opposite point of the Asiatic continent, there prevailed a tradition of a SERPENT-RACE—OPHIOGENÆ, who were said to be descendents of a father, who was formerly "changed from a serpent into a man[1]."

[1] Strabo, lib. 13.

The *locus* of this legend was called *Parium*; whence, perhaps, the Greeks may have derived the epithet παρειαι, which was bestowed upon the serpents of the Bacchanalian mysteries. The usual interpretation of this word, from the *swelling cheeks* of the reptile when irritated, is less probable.

Ælian [1] also speaks of a race of Ophiogenæ in Phrygia, the offspring of a dragon sacred to Diana, and a woman who accidentally entered the grove.

Uniting these fables, we may draw the conclusion, that a colony of Ophites, migrating from Phrygia, settled at Parium. Strabo supposes that they were the Psylli of Africa, so famous for the art of charming serpents: but adduces no reason or authority for the hypothesis.

Besides these inferential evidences of serpent-worship, we have more certain ones in the records of authentic history, which have fixed the temples of Apollo and Æsculapius in various cities of Asia Minor. We may remark, that the serpent invariably entered into the mysteries of the Pythian worship; and that *live serpents* were

[1] De Animal. lib. xii. c. 39.

always preserved in the sanctuaries of Æsculapius. There is, therefore, strong reason for believing, that wherever there was a temple to either of these deities, ophiolatreia, in some modification, existed. Pythian games[1] were held at *Tralles*, *Miletus*, *Magnesia*, *Side*, and *Perga* —all in Asia Minor. *Chalcedon*, *Chrysa*, and *Patara*, were celebrated for the temples which were dedicated in them to Apollo.

The most celebrated temple of Æsculapius in Asia Minor was at *Pergamus*[2]: and all the Pergamean coins, according to Spanheim, bore the figure of a serpent. The Æsculapian worship may be traced in several other places in this country: but to avoid prolixity, I relinquish the search to the more curious and minute investigator. Enough has been said on the *local* indications of ophiolatreia, to establish the point, that vestiges of the superstition may be found in Asia Minor.

But before we take leave of this interesting

[1] Gronov. vii. 869, *on the Arundelian Marbles and Stone found at Megara.*

[2] It is remarkable that this city is particularly stigmatized in Scripture as "*Satan's seat*,"—"*where Satan dwelleth.*"—Rev. ii. 13.

region, there are two places which demand, though in different degrees, our attention, as memorable abodes of the sacred serpent—COLCHOS and ABONITEICHOS. The story of the Colchian Dragon, overcome by Jason, is too well known to require, in this place, a particular narration. It relates to the destruction of an OPHITE TEMPLE, and would be better deferred to a subsequent chapter, which will treat exclusively on that part of our subject. The superstition of Aboniteichos, however, comes immediately under our notice, as a remarkable exhibition of the *oracular* serpent. To the description of a revival of this superstition in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, I will therefore devote the remainder of this section.

From Lucian we learn, that a native of Aboniteichos, *Alexander* by name, being involved in pecuniary difficulties while left in Greece, determined to practise upon the credulity of his contemporaries in the character of a magician. For this purpose he went with a chosen companion to Pella, in Macedonia; a place remarkable for a singular custom, (which, however, had existed from time immemorial,) that of *nourishing tame serpents* of prodigious size, to be play-

fellows and companions of their infant children. Having purchased one of these animals, he sailed to Chalcedon; and there, among the ruins of an old temple of Apollo, pretended to dig up two brazen tablets, "which had been deposited by Æsculapius," and which bore this inscription: "*Æsculapius, and his father Apollo, intend to come into Pontus, and take up their abode at Aboniteichos.*" To Aboniteichos accordingly the impostors went, with their Macedonian serpent: but before they arrived there, the companion of Alexander died. This event, however, by no means disconcerted him. The natives, forewarned, had prepared a temple for his reception, and in this he took up his abode. On an appointed day he proposed to exhibit *the god Æsculapius* to the people,—having previously enclosed a small snake in an egg-shell, and concealed it in a convenient place. When the multitude had assembled in eager expectation, he approached the spot where the egg-shell had been deposited; and muttering certain "*Hebrew and Phœnician words*," unintelligible to the people, (who could only catch the words "*Apollo*," "*Æsculapius*," occasionally introduced,) he plunged in his hand, and producing the egg-shell, exclaimed that

"*the god was within.*" Breaking the shell, he drew out the young snake, which was unanimously hailed as the expected god. From that day, his reputation as the familiar servant of Æsculapius was established. In a few days afterwards he exhibited the large serpent *within his vest*, as the same god Æsculapius whom they had seen in his first state. The admiration of the people at the rapid growth of the god confirmed their original impression of his divinity. For this serpent, the impostor contrived a mask with a human face made of linen, and persuaded the votaries that such was the form under which Æsculapius chose to appear. He gave the serpent the name of GLYCON, and declared that he was "*the third child of Jupiter, and the light of men.*" Henceforward he pretended that Glycon was *oracular*, and by ventriloquism caused him to give responses. Thousands of inquirers flocked from all parts of the Roman Empire to this second Delphi; and, Alexander having carried on the gainful imposture for many years, left a memorial of it upon the coins and medals of Aboniteichos. Engravings of Glycon, as he appeared on these coins, are given by Spanheim, p. 212.

From this curious narrative we may reasonably infer, that had the notion of ophiolatreia been extinct in Paphlagonia, Alexander would not have selected Aboniteichos as the theatre of his fraud. That ophiolatreia did, *indeed*, once flourish in this city, is evident from its name,—Αβωνου τειχος,—the city of AB-ON, *the serpent solar god*. It is probable, therefore, that some traces of it remained to the time of Alexander, who skilfully improved the superstitions of the people to his own advantage.

There are proofs also of his acquaintance with the arcana of serpent-worship, in the story itself. The enclosing of the *snake* in the *egg* indicates his knowledge of the mythological conceit of the SACRED SERPENT and MUNDANE EGG. The placing of the great serpent *in his bosom within his garments*, was a revival of the old Sebazian mysteries, described in a preceding chapter. And the very name of GLYCON, involving the title of the solar deity ON, and illustrated by the epithet "the light of men," seems to have an allusion to ophiolatreia, in its connexion with Zabaism.

Putting together these coincidences, we may conclude that the impostor had acquired his

knowledge of these ancient mysteries from some person or persons then in existence, capable of teaching him: in other words, that primitive serpent-worship was still to be found in Asia Minor in the days of Marcus Aurelius.

XI. THE ISLANDS OF ASIA MINOR.—From the continent of Asia Minor, we pass naturally to the islands which are scattered along its shores; from Cyprus through the Carpathian and Icarian Seas to the Hellespont. In this passage we follow the tract of one of the most renowned of Ophite leaders, who carried the superstitions of his native country first into the islands which lay near it; and from thence, ultimately, into GREECE. It is conjectured by Bochart, that the first migration of the Hivites, who fled before Joshua, was that of the CADMONITES of Mount Hermon, whose leader was CADMUS, so called from the name of the people whom he commanded. It is not likely that all the actions attributed to the adventurer Cadmus were performed by one person; for it is the genius of fable to bestow upon one person the honours acquired, and the labours undergone by many, who may have issued from the same country. The

celebrated Cadmus was, therefore, a fictitious personage, who united in his history the real actions of others, whose separate achievements would not have been sufficiently marvellous for mythology.

Under the guidance of this hero—that is, under the guidance of a Cadmonite from Mount Hermon—colonies of Ophites were settled in Cyprus, Rhodes, Samos, Chios, Icaria, &c. in those islands of the Archipelago which were adjacent to Asia Minor, if not in those which were nearer to Greece.

1. The island of CYPRUS was originally called *Ophiusa*[1]—that is, "the place of serpents:" a name which was very generally given to the settlements of the worshippers of the serpent OPH[2]. The tradition was, that formerly these places *swarmed with serpents:* which, from the *insular* situation of most of them, is not very probable. At Paphos, in Cyprus, there was a tradition of serpents who had *two legs*. This, remarks Bryant, related to *men*, and not to *snakes*[3].

2. RHODES was also called *Ophiusa*[4]: and, ac-

[1] Pliny.
[2] Bryant, *Anal.* ii. 207.
[3] *Anal.* ii. 209.
[4] Strabo, 653.

cording to Bochart[1], still retains its designation in the Syrian *Rhod* (a serpent.) At Rhodes there was a tradition of a number of serpents who desolated the country, and destroyed many of its inhabitants. The survivors sent to Delphi, to consult the oracle, and were desired to bring over PHORBAS, who, taking up his residence in the island, soon exterminated the reptiles. He was exalted after death into the constellation OPHIUCHUS[2], which is the same with the OPHIONEUS of Phœnicia. There are some curious coincidences with serpent-worship, in the history of this Phorbas. He was the grandson of Apollo, and father of Iphis, in which word we recognise the root *Eph* or *Oph*. APOLLO is the solar deity symbolized by the serpent OPH; and "Phorbas" may be decomposed into PHI-OR-AB; *i. e.* "*The oracle of the solar serpent*[3]." It appears, also, that Phorbas married HERMYNE—which may mean "*a woman of Hermon*," where the Hivites resided.

In the legend before us, we trace a confusion

[1] Geog. Sacr. Part 2. lib. i. c. 7.

[2] Geog. Sacr. Part 2. lib. i. c. 7. citing Diod. and Hygin.

[3] Faber derives *Phorbas* from Ph'-or-ob-as, "*the burning solar serpent.*" (Cabiri. i. 351.)

of ideas, by which THE ORACLE OF THE SERPENT-GOD, established perhaps at Rhodes by the Hivites of Hermon, is converted into *a man*, PHORBAS, who delivered the island from serpents. The whole story might have originated in a colony of Hivites from the continent, dispossessing the natives *(Ophites also)* of their country. The translation of Phorbas into the constellation Ophiuchus, or Ophioneus, corroborates the connexion of this legend with ophiolatreia.

3. In the island of ICARIA was a temple of Diana, called *Tauropolium;* and a small town named *Draconum* stood upon a promontory of the same name[1]. Tauropolium, according to Bryant, is TOR-OP-EL—*the tower of the god Oph.* We may infer, therefore, from the connexion of Draconum *(the town of the dragon)* with Tauropolium, *(the temple of the serpent-god,)* that the Hivites of Phœnicia settled also in the island of Icaria.

4. A coin of SAMOS represents *an erect serpent before a naked man holding a ring in his hand.* It is probable, therefore, according to the hypothesis before laid down, that the worship of the serpent once prevailed at Samos.

[1] Strabo, 659.

5. At Chios, there was another settlement of Hivites, as the name of the island, and a tradition preserved in it, would import. "*Chios*" is derived from "*Hhivia*," the same root from whence comes "*Hivite*[1];" the meaning of which word is ascertained to be "*a serpent*." The Hivites who settled in this island were finally exterminated, according to the probable import of the following legend :—At Chios was a mountain called Pelineus ; *i. e.* according to Bochart, *Peli-naas—the stupendous serpent*. "Under this mountain," says Ælian[2], "there lived *an immense dragon*, whose voice was so terrific that no one could ever approach his cave to see him. He was at length destroyed by setting fire to piles of wood placed at the mouth of the cavern." This relates, probably, to the destruction of a vast temple, which the Hivites had erected on that mountain, or at the foot of it. *Why* this Hivite temple should be called AN IMMENSE DRAGON, will be shown in the chapter which treats of "Ophite temples."

These were the chief settlements of the ophites in Asia Minor; and with these notices we con-

[1] Bochart. Geog. Sac. Part. 2. lib. i. c. 9.

[2] Cited by Bochart, *ut supra*.

clude our investigation of SERPENT-WORSHIP IN ASIA.

The Syrian Ophites were the Hivites of Scripture, and the Cadmians of mythology. But the name of "Cadmians" was rather general than particular—it was bestowed indiscriminately upon the authors of this superstition, whether proceeding from Lebanon or Egypt. "They were a two-fold colony which came both from Egypt and Syria[1]." The Syrian Cadmians colonized the islands above mentioned. The Egyptian adventurers settled first in Crete, and afterwards in the Cyclades, Peloponnesus, Greece, Samothrace, Macedonia, Illyrium, &c. as we shall hereafter find.

It appears, then, from a review of what has been already ascertained, that THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT pervaded Babylonia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Persia, India, Cachmere, China, Japan, Java, Ceylon, Arabia, Syria, Colchis, and Asia Minor—a tract of country over which (the worship of the sun alone excepted) *no other superstition was so uniformly spread.* It entered also into the religion of the Scythian tribes, who

[1] Bryant, Anal. ii. 460.

bore for their banner the sacred dragon [1]: and was carried with them, probably, to the river OBI—a river, in whose name is preserved to the present day, a memorial of the sacred serpent OB. It might indeed have been called "the serpent river," from its winding course; but this is not a *peculiarity* of any river—it is common to all: and the recorded fact that the OSTIACKES, who inhabited the banks of the OBI, among their other idols, worshipped *the image* of A SERPENT [2], tends strongly to corroborate our hypothesis.

[1] Koch de Cultu Serpentum, p. 30; also *Suidas*.

[2] *New Memoirs of Literature*. Anno 1725, vol. i. 421.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER II.

SERPENT-WORSHIP IN AFRICA.

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I. EGYPT.—Of all the nations of antiquity, none was so infamous for idolatry, as Egypt. She was the *alma mater* of every superstition; conveying, with her colonists, wherever they were settled, some corruption of the truth, which, under the fostering care of her established priesthood, assumed a form of consistency and allurement. Among the rest, the worship of the serpent was in her early history an important and conspicuous part of her idolatry. The serpent entered into the Egyptian religion under all his characters, of AN EMBLEM OF DIVINITY, A CHARM, AN ORACLE, and A GOD.

1. As an emblem of divinity, the sacred serpent was particularly symbolical of the gods CNEPH and THOTH, and of the goddess ISIS: though he entered, more or less, into the symbolical worship of all the gods.

HARPOCRATES, a very ancient god of the Egyptians, was symbolized by the serpent. He is generally represented with his left hand on a staff, surmounted by a cornucopia: round the staff is twined a serpent[1]. He is the god of silence; to denote which the forefinger of the right hand is on his mouth. He is supposed by some to be the same as HORUS.

CNEPH was considered by the Egyptian priests as "the architect of the universe," and was adored as "the good dæmon." He was sometimes represented as A SERPENT WITH AN EGG IN HIS MOUTH. The egg denoted the mundane elements as proceeding from him. The serpent in a circle, passing diametrically and horizontally from circumference to circumference, was his hieroglyphical emblem. This became the ninth letter of the Egyptian alphabet, and was called *Thita*[2]; from which the Greeks borrowed both the form and name of their *Theta*. The name of this letter was derived from that of its inventor THOTH, the reformer of the religion and manners of Egypt, and the supposed author

[1] Montfaucon, ii. 191.

[2] Kircher Œdip. Ægypt. vol. iii. p. 46, who calls it the thirteenth letter.

of the hieroglyphic system. He is said by Sanchoniathon to have introduced ophiolatreia; and was, as we observed in a former part of this volume, most probably the founder of the first colonies after the flood which were established in Phœnicia and Egypt. He taught the Egyptians (or rather that part of his colony which was settled in Egypt) a religion, which partaking of Zabaism and Ophiolatreia, had some mixture also of primeval truth. The divine Spirit he denominated CNEPH, and described him as "*the original, eternal Spirit, pervading all creation*[1]," whose symbol was a SERPENT.

For his many services to the people, in teaching them letters, hieroglyphics, astronomy, and morals, TAAUTUS or THOTH was deified after death as "the god of health," or of "healing," and became the prototype of the god ÆSCULAPIUS[2]. He was also identified with HERMES or MERCURY.

As "the god of healing," THOTH was himself symbolized by the serpent, which he had taught the Egyptians to consider as a *general* emblem of divinity. The seventh letter of the

[1] Jablonski Panth. Ægypt. c. iv. p. 81.

[2] Ibid. lib. v. c. 6.

Egyptian alphabet, called *zeuta*, or "*life*," was sacred to him[1], and expressed by *a serpent standing upon his tail.* Hence the name and the form of the corresponding letter in the Grecian alphabet, Z ζ.

THOTH, as the god of healing, is represented leaning upon a knotted stick, which is enfolded by a serpent: and a female deity, corresponding with the Grecian goddess Hygeia, is encircled by a serpent who drinks out of a chalice in her hand[2].

The serpent was also symbolical of ISIS, and formed a conspicuous feature in her mysteries. The Isiac table[3], which describes these mysteries, is charged with serpents in every part, as emblems of the goddess.

The species of serpent peculiarly dedicated to Isis was the *asp.* This is seen on the heads of her statues, and on the bonnets and sashes of her

[1] Kircher. Œdip. Æg. iii. 36; who calls it the 12th letter.

[2] Montfaucon, vol. 5.

[3] This was a celebrated plate of brass overlaid with black enamel, intermixed with plates of silver. It was destroyed at the taking of Mantua, 1630. *See Montfaucon*, who has engraved it, vol. 2.

priests. The tiara of the kings of Egypt was ornamented with the figures of the same reptile. "When the Egyptians wished to represent Isis as an angry avenger of crimes, they placed an *asp* on her head, which was designated by the peculiar name of *Thermuthis*, i. e. *deadly*[1]." We learn also from Ælian[2]: "The asp, to which the Egyptians gave the name of Thermuthis, they say is sacred, and worship it there; and they crown the images of Isis with it, as with a royal diadem." There is a fragment in the Elgin collection of marbles in the British Museum, which appears to be a leonine head of Isis, crowned with a coronet of asps. Ovid, (Met. ix. 690, &c.) describing the dream of Telethusa, the mother of Iphis, represents Isis as appearing with her constant companion *the serpent;* which he thus characterizes:—

"Plena que somniferi serpens peregrina veneni."

A character which answers to that of the Thermuthis. The same poet again mentions the asp of Isis, when he imprecates that goddess in the following words:—

[1] Jablonski, P. Æg. 119. See also Bryant ii. 200.

[2] De Anim. x. 31.

Per tua sistra precor, per Anubidis ora verendi,
(Sic tua sacra pius semper Osiris amet,
PIGRAQUE LABATUR CIRCA DONARIA SERPENS[1]—)

From which we may infer that LIVING ASPS were kept in the temples of Isis, and employed, perhaps, to *glide about the offerings*, to sanctify them. This will throw a light on the practice of the Syrian ophites mentioned in the preceding chapter; namely, the hallowing of the Eucharist *by the gliding of the sacred serpent about the bread.* This custom obtained also, as we shall observe in the sequel, among the Britons and Scandinavians in their most solemn mysteries.

The asp of Isis was not a reptile of Egyptian production. Ovid, we may remark, describes her as accompanied by a "*peregrina* serpens," a *foreign* serpent; and all the representations of the asp describe it as having a large expanded head, unlike any snake which has ever been found in Egypt. It was probably the *hooded* serpent of India, which is invariably the sacred snake of that country. But how it became an emblem of divinity in Egypt it is not easy to prove; for the native two-horned snake of the

[1] Lib. 2. Amor. Eleg. 13.

temple of Jupiter at Thebes, was also held in great reverence. It is possible that the worship of Isis may find its prototype in the adoration of the Indian Isi. The sacred asp of the hieroglyphics, is different from the common asp of Egypt, which was merely a viper.

The serpent, however, was not confined to Cneph, Thoth and Isis, though more peculiarly consecrated to their worship. There is scarcely an Egyptian deity which is not occasionally symbolized by it. Several of these deities are represented with their proper heads terminating in serpents' bodies. In Montfaucon, vol. 2, plate 207, there is an engraving of Serapis, with a human head and serpentine tail. Two other minor gods are also represented, the one by a serpent with a bull's head, the other by a serpent with the radiated head of the lion. The second of these, which Montfaucon supposes to be an image of Apis, is bored through the middle: "probably," remarks that learned antiquary, "with a design to hang about the neck, as they did many other small figures of Gods, by way of ornaments or charms."

The figure of Serapis, encircled by serpents, is found on tombs. The appearance of *serpents*

on tombs was very general. On an urn of Egnatius Nicephoras, and of Herbasia Clymene, engraved in Montfaucon, vol. 5, a young man entwined by a serpent is described as falling headlong to the ground. In the urn of Herbasia Clymene the corners are ornamented with figures of serpents. It is a singular coincidence that the creature by whom came DEATH into the world should be consecrated by the earliest heathen idolaters to the receptacles of the *dead*. It is remarkable also, that SERAPIS was supposed by the Egyptians "*to have dominion over evil dæmons*[1]," or in other words, was the same as PLUTO or SATAN.

As an emblem of *dedication* to the service or honour of THE DEITY, the serpent was sculptured with a GLOBE and WINGS on the porticoes of most of the Egyptian temples, and on the summits of some of the obelisks. The temples of LUXORE, ESNAY, KOMOMBU, DENDARA, and APOLLINOPOLIS, are surmounted by this favourite symbol of consecration[2]; and it appears on the top of each compartment of the Pamphylian

[1] Porphyry in Euseb. cited by Montfaucon, *supplement*, ii. 214.

[2] See plates in Maurice Ind. Antiq. Vols. II. III. IV.

obelisk [1]. Two serpents, *without the wings and globe*, are sculptured on each of the capitals of the pillars in the temple of GAVA, as delineated by Pococke [2]. On the Pamphylian obelisk the hieroglyphic serpent appears in all his forms, with and without the globe or wings, *fifty-two times*; and is seen also on others.

The great consideration in which the symbolical serpent was held by the Egyptians, appears in the *variations* under which he is found on monumental remains. The reason of these has been assigned by authors who have undertaken to investigate the nature and object of Egyptian hieroglyphics. The serpent was deemed symbolical of the *divine wisdom*, *power*, and *creative energy* [3]; of *immortality* and *regeneration*, from the shedding of his skin; and of *eternity*, when represented in the act of biting his own tail. Besides these various symbolizations, we are informed that the Egyptians represented the world by a circle, intersected by two diameters perpendicular to each other [4]. These diameters were *serpents*, as we may

[1] See plate in Kircher.

[2] Desc. of East. i. 70.

[3] Bryant, Plagues of Egypt, 209.

[4] Jablonski, P. Æg. lib. i. p. 86.

gather from Eusebius [1], who tells us that "the world was described by a circle and a *serpent passing diametrically horizontally through it.*" The circle represented the terrestrial globe, and the intersecting serpents the solstitial colures. This emblem was more common than that mentioned by Eusebius [2]. Jablonski seems to think that the *circumference only* was a serpent, and the diameters right lines; but the passage above referred to in Eusebius corrects him.

The learned Kircher has also instructed us that the several *elements* were likewise represented by serpents in various positions. Thus when they desired to depict the element of EARTH, "which was animated by the igneous power of OPH, (the genius who governed all things, and was symbolized by the serpent,) they drew *a prostrate two-horned snake.*" When they wished to denote the element of WATER, they described a serpent moving in an *undulated* manner. The AIR was represented by an *erect* serpent in the act of *hissing;* this was the figure which formed the letter *zeuta.* The element of FIRE they denoted by an asp standing on his tail, and bearing upon his head a globe:

[1] Præp. Ev. lib. i. p. 42. [2] Jablonski ut supra.

while "*the igneous quality*"—the "auraï simplicis ignis"—the divine principle of animation which pervades all things—they represented by a circle with *a snake horizontally bisecting it.* This is the letter *thita;* and the emblem described by Eusebius as the "character mundi."

From which hieroglyphics it is clear that THE SERPENT was the most expressive symbol of divinity with the Egyptians. The last figure, the emblem of the "Vis ignea," was peculiarly the hieroglyphic of the god CNEPH, the Agathodæmon and Demiurge of Egyptian mythology, the chief god of their original worship.

The extent to which the veneration of the symbolical serpent prevailed in Egypt, is illustrated by a very curious plate of gold discovered at Malta, in the year 1694, in the old wall of the city, where it is supposed to have been concealed by its former possessor in the days of religious fervour, when every thing idolatrous was consumed as abominable. This interesting relic is engraved in Montfaucon, vol. ii. p. 207, and thus described: "This plate was rolled up in a golden casket; it consists of two long rows, which contain a very great number of Egyptian deities, most of which have the head

of some beast or bird. *Many serpents* are also seen intermixed, the arms and legs of the gods terminating in serpents' tails. The first figure has upon its back a long shell, with a serpent upon it: in each row there is *a serpent extended upon an altar*. Among the figures of the second row there is seen an Isis, of tolerably good form. This same plate, no doubt, contains the most profound mysteries of the Egyptian superstition." It is a representation, probably, of the mysteries of Isis.

Among the curiosities of Egyptian idolatry were the VOTIVE HANDS and FEET, sometimes found in temples. They were offered up in the same manner as the church of Rome consecrates waxen images of hands and feet, &c. commemorative of preservations—a custom derived, doubtless, from Pagans, as are most of the religious ceremonies of the Romish church. These VOTIVE HANDS [1] or FEET are charged with figures of *serpents*, emblematic of recovered health.

The *basilisk* or royal serpent, so called as being the most venomous of the species, and, as

[1] In the British Museum, among the Grecian Antiquities, are two *votive feet*, encircled by *serpents*.

it were, *a king of snakes*, was named Ob or Oub [1]. This, as we observed before, was the name of the oracular god of Canaan, identical with the Python of Delphi. The Egyptians represented this serpent upon their coins, darting rays from his head, as if adorned with a crown. Round the coin was inscribed "Agathodæmon." The Roman Emperor Nero, in the madness of his vanity, caused several such coins to be struck with the inscription, "The new Agathodæmon"—meaning himself [2]. There was a similar medal struck by the Egyptian gnostics, on which the word "Cnuphis" was stamped. By this the idolatrous heretics intended to signify JESUS CHRIST [3].

The Egyptian gnostics of the school of Basilides were much addicted to magic; and among their amulets had certain gems called *Abraxas*. This was the name which they gave to the Almighty, because, said they, "the letters forming the word '*Abraxas*,' in Greek numeration, would make up the number three hundred and sixty-five; that is, the number of the days in one revolution of the sun, as the word

[1] Horus Apollo, c. i. p. 2. [2] Spanheim De Usu Num. 188.
[3] Jablonski, P. Æ. 89.

Mithras, or Meithras, also contains them." The name of the deity they transferred to gems, on which his mysteries or symbols were inscribed. Most of these gems had the figure of a SERPENT upon them, either by himself, or terminating the legs of a god with a cock's head. The leonine serpent, with a circle of rays about his head, was commonly engraved upon them. The inscriptions frequently alluded to the Jewish or Christian religions in the words "*Iao Sabaoth*," "*Adonai*," &c. which formed them. A serpent biting his own tail, to represent eternity, was often seen on those gems [1].

These Abraxas, in which Egyptian idolatry and Christian revelation were so inextricably interwoven, are existing proofs of the prevalence of ophiolatreia in the first ages of the church.

The Egyptians held basilisks in such veneration, that they made images of them in gold, and consecrated and placed them in the temples of their gods [2]. Bryant thinks that they were the same as the Thermuthis, or deadly

[1] See Plates, &c. in Montfaucon.

[2] Horus Apollo, c. i. p. 2.

asp. These creatures the Egyptian priests are said to have preserved by digging holes for them in the corners of their temples [1]; and it was a part of their superstition to believe that whoever was accidentally bitten by them was divinely favoured [1].

The serpent is sometimes found sculptured, and attached to the breasts of mummies; but whether with a view to talismanic security, or as indicative of the priesthood of Isis, is doubtful. A female mummy, opened by M. Passalacqua at Paris a few years ago, was adorned with a *necklace of serpents carved in stone.* The small figure of the bull-headed serpent, mentioned above, may have been intended for a similar purpose. Bracelets, in the form of *serpents*, were worn by the Grecian women in the time of Clemens Alexandrinus, who thus reproves the fashion: "The women are not ashamed to place about them *the most manifest symbols of the evil one;* for as the serpent deceived Eve, so the golden trinket *in the fashion of a serpent* misleads

[1] Gesner, Hist. Anim. p. 54, citing Ælian. To some such notion may possibly be referred Cleopatra's choice of death. She destroyed herself by the venom of a viper.

the women [1]." The children also wore chaplets of the same kind [2].

Between Egypt and Greece there was always a great intercourse; and many of the customs, and most of the mythology of the latter, were derived from the former. It is not improbable, therefore, that these serpentine trinkets were worn also in Egypt; but whether as merely ornamental, or as talismanic, or as indicative of the priesthood of Cneph or Isis, I will not venture to decide.

2. But a very striking example of the *talismanic serpent* may be seen in the celebrated CADUCEUS, which was usually, though not exclusively, attributed to Hermes or Mercury. It did not *exclusively* belong to that god, for we may find it in the hand of Cybele, "the Syrian goddess," the mother of the gods [3]. Cybele is the same as OPS, in whose history the serpent makes a prominent feature. We find it again,

[1] Pæd. lib. ii. 245. Edit. Potter.

[2] Cœl. Rhodig. cited by Gesner, Hist. Anim. 32. Dr. Clarke, Travels, vol. i. p. 72, describes a very beautiful bracelet of golden serpents which was found in a tumulus, near the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

[3] Montfaucon, Vol. i. plate, p. 8.

held by Minerva[1]; and again, by the Egyptian Anubis[2]. It is seen in the hands of Hercules Ogmius, the god of the Celts; and of the personified constellation Virgo, who is said by Lucian[3] to have had her symbol in the Pythian priestess; from which we may infer that the Caduceus was a sacred badge at Delphi.

The CADUCEUS was represented under various forms, according to the fancy of the sculptor, but almost always preserved the original design of *a winged wand entwined by two serpents.* Sometimes it was described without the wings, but never, properly, without the serpents: the variations consisted chiefly in the number of the folds made by the serpents' bodies round the wand, and the relative positions of the wings, and serpents' heads. The CADUCEUS was deemed powerful in paralyzing the mind, and raising the dead. This talismanic character was probably inherent in the *serpents*, rather than in any other part of the Caduceus; for though frequently exhibited without the wings, it is rarely, if ever, seen without the serpents. The

[1] Montfaucon, Vol. i. plate, p. 85.

[2] Kircher, Pamp. Obel. plate of Anubis.

[3] De Astrolog. p. 544, Edit. 1615, Paris.

notion of the *charm* was probably derived from an obscure traditionary memorial of the fascination of the paradisiacal serpent. The fascination of the serpent's eye was universally believed by the ancients, insomuch that "a serpent's eye" became a proverb among the Greeks and Romans to denote peculiar acuteness and intentness of mind [1].

The origin of the Caduceus has been elaborately developed by the learned Kircher, in his dissertation on the Pamphylian obelisk [2]. From him we learn that the Caduceus was originally expressed by the simple figure of a cross, by which its inventor, Thoth, is said to have symbolized *the four elements* proceeding from a common centre. This symbol, after undergoing some alterations, was used as a letter of the Egyptian alphabet, and called, from its inventor, *Taut*. It was the corresponding letter to the Hebrew *Tau*, though different in shape. It corresponded with it also in its mystic signification.

The next form assumed by this remarkable symbol was ☿ : the figure of the *sun* being superadded, as if to denote that the sun was

[1] Parkhurst, Lex. οφις.

[2] Lib. iv. Hierogr. 20.

the great author of action to the mundane elements. By this figure was symbolized the deity of fecundity and generation; and hence it became, subsequently, a symbol of the planet VENUS. Jablonski thinks that it was nothing more nor less than the infamous *Phallus;* but the authority of Kircher must be allowed respect.

The moon being also united with the sun, in the opinion of the Egyptians, as a parent of life and heat and vegetation, the *lunar* emblem was added to the *solar*. The sun and moon, as the father and mother of the universe, contributed, therefore, their conjoint character to the Taautic symbol, which in its new form was described thus ☿. This was the complete figure which represented the supreme deity. It was called by the Egyptians the TAAUTIC EMBLEM; and when Thoth was elevated into the rank of a god, by the name of Hermes or Mercury, it became his hieroglyphic. Hence it was employed as a symbol of the planet MERCURY; for in early mythology every deified hero was changed into a planet or constellation. The SUN, being the great object of primeval idolatry, was worshipped with the highest honours; and THOTH, being the great prophet and reformer of the

Egyptian religion, to *him* they gave the post of honour *next to the sun*. Hence the planet which revolves *nearest to the sun* was called Hermes, or Mercury, and regarded as the celestial mansion of the deified Thoth [1].

Thoth first taught the Egyptians to symbolize divinity by serpents; hence the two chief objects of Egyptian idolatry, the SUN and the MOON, were represented by two serpents, male and female. Later philosophers, therefore, not deeming the Taautic emblem sufficiently explicit of its own meaning, substituted for *the lunar crescent* and *the solar circle*, TWO SERPENTS, the representatives of these deities, each of which was most ingeniously described by *the intersecting of the two serpents*, so as to form a circle *below*, and a crescent *above*, with their bodies. The arms of the cross they changed in like manner into WINGS, which were emblematical of the *hovering* of the divine spirit

[1] For this conjecture I must crave indulgence; for though only a conjecture, unsupported by authority, I cannot but consider it as founded on probability. The reader will find, upon reference to Kircher, that I have taken other liberties with his argument besides this, which may stand or fall by its own merits.

over the mundane elements. The mundane elements were consequently reduced to be represented by the *shaft* of the cross.

This improved form of the Taautic emblem, and *the first form* of the CADUCEUS, was thus depicted. In this form it is seen in the hand of ANUBIS, in the plate engraved of him in Herwart's Hieroglyphic Theatre, from which it is copied by Kircher. After this, the CADUCEUS underwent many variations. The serpents were made to entwine *about* the shaft, and the wings were placed *above* the serpents. The intersections of the serpents, also, became more frequent, sometimes amounting to three or four; and gave rise to the fable of Jupiter and Rhea, to which the supposed conjugal union of the sun and moon (represented by these serpents) gave some colour. Sometimes the point of intersection was a *knot*, which was called "the knot of Hercules[1]."

But notwithstanding all these variations, the original idea was never lost. The symbol was

[1] Macrob. Saturnal. lib. i. c. 19.

always in the hand of Mercury, though occasionally it adorned the statues and medals of other deities; and it was always *a talisman* of extraordinary power. For this talismanic character two causes may be assigned: the *one*, inherent in the SERPENTS, from a traditionary recollection of the "subtilty" of the creature who seduced our first mother; the *other*, residing in the simple CROSS, the basis of the Taautic emblem. So much may be said in favour of the latter opinion, and so great is the probability in favour of the former, that we cannot err *in combining the two causes* to complete the talisman.

Kircher supposes that Thoth received the emblem upon which he founded the *crux ansata* from the patriarchs (before the flood, I presume,) by tradition. Of this there can be no proof. Certain it is, however, that by the descendents of the patriarchs after the flood, the figure of a CROSS was ever esteemed a most sacred sign, whatever may have been its origin or mystery. It occurs, according to Maurice, among the hieroglyphics of the Brahmins, and is stamped upon the most magnificent shrines of their deities. On the Egyptian obelisks the Taautic

emblem was of common occurrence, and has been found on monuments among the ruins of Axum in Abyssinia[1]. It is the same figure which has been called "the Key of the Nile."

Much curious learning has been employed upon the origin of this celebrated character. The Hebrew ת is supposed to have been derived from it, though it has lost the figure of the original sign which is more accurately preserved in the Greek T; and still more so, in the Coptic *dau*.

It is supposed that an allusion is made to this mysterious sign in Ezekiel ix. 4, where God directs "the man clothed in linen, which had the writing inkhorn by his side," to set "A MARK" upon the foreheads of those who lamented the prevalence of idolatry in Jerusalem. In the original the phrase is, "set a TAU (תו) upon their foreheads." The vulgate preserves the real meaning of the command,—"*mark with the* LETTER TAU *the foreheads*," &c. Upon which Lowth observes, that in the parallel passage in the Septuagint, το Σημειον *(a mark)* should be TAU Σημειον *(the mark* TAU.) It has been finally determined by the learned, that in

[1] See Bruce's Travels—plate.

the Samaritan character *(in which Ezekiel wrote,)* the ת was formerly cruciform, in the shape of our T, or the Coptic *dau:* from whence it would appear that the sign T was a very sacred sign in the days of Ezekiel; an hieroglyphic denoting the *property* of the deity.

Count De Gebelin, cited by Maurice, *(Hist. Hindost.)* observes that the Greeks, adding to the word THAU the particle MA, (which in Sanscrit means "*grand,*") formed the word THAUMA (Θαυμα), a *sign* or *prodigy.* And he further remarks, that in France, during the early ages of Christianity, the officiating priest who performed the ceremony of baptism, used the expression "CRUCIS THAUMATE *notare.*"

It is probable that the early Christians, perceiving how aptly this ancient symbol of dedication to the deity might be used to signify the dedication of the convert to CHRIST, employed it in baptism without any fear of scandal, as it symbolized likewise the cross upon which the SAVIOUR died.

There seems to be an allusion to this ancient custom of setting the THAU upon the foreheads of the servants of God, in that saying of our

Lord, "If any man will come after me, let him *take up his* CROSS and follow me [1]".

I grant that this might have been figuratively spoken, in reference to the *perils* which the disciple would undergo: but does it mean nothing more? I cannot but think that it does; for the subsequent verses represent a picture not much dissimilar to that in the 9th chapter of Ezekiel, where the expression "thau" first occurs. Our Lord goes on to say, "*For* whosoever will save his life, *shall lose it:* and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, *shall find it* . . . . For the Son of Man shall *come* in the glory of his Father with his angels; *and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*" Now, comparing this passage with the 9th chapter of Ezekiel, we shall find that the abstract ideas are the same,—namely, a divine visitation and judgment, in which the righteous are to be spared in the destruction of the wicked. Whoever among the inhabitants of the polluted city should be found by the destroying angel with the THAU *(the cross)* upon his forehead, would be spared; whoever among the millions of the departed souls shall be found at the second coming of the

[1] Matt. xvi. 24.

Lord in judgment, with *his mark* upon them, will be saved; whoever shall have earnestly *taken up the* CROSS OF CHRIST, will inherit eternal glory.

St. Paul also alludes to the same acknowledged sign of consecration to the Deity, when he says, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; *for I bear in my body* THE MARKS of the LORD JESUS[1]."

It is the custom of the Brahmins, to this day, to set a *mark* on the foreheads of the votaries of Veshnu and Seeva; and the Oriental Christians were accustomed to mark CRUCIFIXES on their arms and other parts of the body. The phylacteries of the Hebrews are also well known. The Mahometans, again, write the word "ALLAH" (God) upon their persons[2]. All of which customs may be traced to one common origin, which I conceive to be of the most remote antiquity. The first mention of a MARK is of that set upon CAIN; and though this may at first sight appear to militate against the argument before us, yet upon consideration we shall find that it confirms

[1] Gal. vi. 17. See also Rev. xiii. 16. and xiv. 1.

[2] Burder's Oriental Customs on Ezek. ix. 4, and Gal. vi. 17.

it. Whatever might have been the nature of the mark set upon Cain, one thing is clear—that *it denoted the bearer of it to be placed under the immediate protection of God, so that no one should dare to slay him*[1].

Very pertinent to our question is the remark, that when the Greeks intimated the condemnation of a criminal to death, they marked his name in the judicial tablet, with the letter Θ; and on the contrary, when they wished to express his *acquittal*, with a T[2]. The former is said to have been the initial letter of Θάνατος—*death*: but of the latter we have received no satisfactory explanation from the ancients. It is probably derived from the original symbol of dedication to the Deity, which we have been considering, borrowed by the Greeks from the Egyptians, and used in ignorance of its mystic meaning. The T which was to be set upon the foreheads of the servants of God in Jerusalem,

[1] Some learned men, as Mr. Faber, doubt the Rabbinical legend, and even whether there was any *mark* at all upon Cain. They translate the text, "And the Lord *appointed a sign* unto Cain, that no one finding him should kill him."

[2] *Alexander ab Alex.* lib. iii. c. 5, cum notis Tiraquelli. See also *Persius*, Sat. iv. 12.

was of the same nature as the blood sprinkled upon the door-posts of the Israelites in Egypt, to signify to the destroying angel those whom God had taken under his immediate protection, and who were to be saved in the destruction of the wicked. It was, in effect, a symbol of *acquittal;* God having *acquitted* or *justified* them; and therefore they were to be spared. From this original emblem of divine protection, the Greeks derived the notion of marking the names of acquitted persons with a T, without, however, knowing its real signification. The Θ, as a sign of condemnation, was plausibly explained as the initial letter of the word Θάνατος; and it is perhaps under this character that we find it impressed upon *tombs*[1]. But it is a singular fact, and worthy of consideration, that this letter Θ was invented by, and named after, the same THOTH, who is said to have introduced the mystic *Tau* into the Egyptian alphabet; and as Θαῦμα implied "*a wonder*," so Θηταλὰ implied Θαυμαστὰ, "*wonderful*"—Ψεύδεσιν ὅμοια, says Hesychius, "*like lies.*" Now in Scripture, IDOLATRY is uniformly described as a LIE. "Is there not a LIE in my right hand?"

[1] Montf. Supplent. vol. v. p. 42.

is the question which the prophet Isaiah would have the maker of graven images ask himself, while he is fabricating a god. Hence, perhaps, as the mystic THAU denoted him who was marked with it to be the servant of God, the mystic THETA might in opposition signify, the votary of IDOLATRY: and hence, when T was adopted as a symbol of *acquittal*, Θ would be received as a sign of *condemnation*.

Calmet (*Comment sur Ezek.* c. 9) has a note explanatory of the mystic THAU, and brings forward the original text of Job xxxi. 35, as another instance of its application—"Behold, here is my THAU! let the Almighty answer me." *This* he contends is the right translation. "Behold my SIGN!" is the marginal reading of our authorized version. The whole context evidently refers to some *distinctive badge*, worn by Job. The very next verse alludes to it—"Surely I would *take it upon my shoulder*, and *bind it as a crown* to me."

A very curious form of the Taautic symbol is sometimes presented in Egyptian hieroglyphics —that of a hawk-headed serpent issuing from a circle which surmounts the cross, and having another smaller circle at the extremity of his

tail. The *hawk-headed serpent* was a favourite emblem of the DIVINE MIND, with the Egyptians, according to Sanchoniathon—"Their *most divine symbol* was a serpent having the face of a hawk. When he opens his eyes, the whole of first-born space is filled with light: when he shuts them, it is darkness[1]." This hieroglyphic was a perfect symbol of the Supreme Being.

In concluding this long and desultory article, we may remark, that all the planets known to the ancients were distinguished by the mystic Taautic Cross, in conjunction with the solar or lunar symbols:—Thus,

♄ SATURN was denoted by the lunar emblem, surmounted by the Taautic cross.

♃ JUPITER, by the lunar emblem, surmounting the Θαῦμα.

♂ MARS, by its combination with the solar symbol.

♀ VENUS was distinguished by the same combination, but the Taautic cross was below the circle.

☿ MERCURY united all the symbols.

Whatever may be the mystic meaning of these astronomical signs, their connexion with

[1] Euseb. Præp. Evang. i. 41.

the solar and lunar idolatry, and their claim upon THOTH, as the author of their existence, seem manifest—the same THOTH, or TAAUTUS, who promoted OPHIOLATREIA.

3. OPHIOLATREIA had taken such deep root in Egypt, that the serpent was not merely regarded as an emblem of divinity, but even held in estimation as *the instrument of an oracle*. The priests of the temple of Isis had a silver image of a serpent so constructed as to enable a person in attendance to move its head without being observed by the supplicating votary. Juvenal refers to it in his sixth Satire, v. 537.

"*Et movisse caput visa est argentea serpens.*"

Perhaps this was the same as the hawk-headed basilisk whose eyes were mechanically contrived to open or shut, according as the offering presented by the suppliant was received or rejected [1]. This contrivance was intended, probably, as a type of what was supposed to pass in the regions of "first-born space," upon the opening or closing of the eyes of the god CNEPH. Under the symbol of a hawk-headed serpent, this god was adored, and a temple was erected to him in

[1] Gesner. *Hist. Anim.* lib. v. p. 59.

the island of Elephantina in the upper Nile. He was esteemed prophetic, and his shrine resorted to as oracular.

4. But Egyptian superstition was not contented with worshipping divinity through its emblem the serpent. The senseless idolater soon bowed in adoration before the symbol itself; and worshipped this reptile, the representative of man's enemy, as a GOD.

This idolatry was certainly older than the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. For the author of the Book of Wisdom tells us, that when the Egyptians refused to let the children of Israel go, they were punished by plagues of *the same animals* which they had been accustomed to venerate as gods. Among these, the chief were serpents:—

"But for the foolish devices of their wickedness, wherewith being deceived, *they worshipped serpents devoid of reason*, and wild beasts: thou didst send a multitude of unreasonable beasts upon them for vengeance, that they might know, that wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished[1]."

Our elegant and learned etymologist, Bryant,

[1] Wisd. c. xi. v. 15.

following up this idea, has elaborately and beautifully shown, in his "Essay on the Plagues of Egypt," that "wherewithal the Egyptians had sinned, by the same were they punished." The objects of their idolatry became the instruments of their punishment.

Another proof of the superior antiquity of Ophiolatreia is afforded by the divining cup of Joseph mentioned in Gen. xliv. The mention of this superstition in connection with such a name is not a little remarkable; and commentators have accordingly exerted themselves to explain away the inference that Joseph practised the heathen art of divination. I am as unwilling as any of them to believe that the Hebrew Patriarch was an idolater; but that the "divining cup" here mentioned was similar to the *Poculum Boni Dæmonis* of the Bacchanalian orgies, which so closely corresponded with those of Isis, cannot well be doubted by any one who examines the phraseology of the original text. Such a cup was preserved in the collection of the late Earl of Besborough, and is described by Mr. Pownall in the seventh volume of the Archæologia. Upon the lid of it are two serpents, and on the cup itself near the rim, the Ophite hierogram of

Medusa's head. The divining cup of Joseph may not have been so decorated; but it may have been originally or *ostensibly* kept for a similar purpose. For it should be recollected that Joseph married the daughter of Potipherah, the priest of On: of the priest, namely, who presided in the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, with which deity the Ophite hierogram was intimately connected. Nothing is more natural, therefore, than that the daughter of an Ophite priest should introduce into the household of her husband an instrument of Ophite idolatry. It does not follow that Joseph used it as such; but it follows from his whole conduct that he wished to pass as an *Egyptian* with his brethren, and the claiming such a cup as among his most valued property would only be acting in accordance with the character he had assumed.

It may be objected that the cup in question was not a *divining* cup, in the idolatrous application of that expression; but only a means by which Joseph *divined* or *discovered* that he had been robbed; namely, by missing it at his accustomed meal. But the phraseology of the original will lead to another inference. Joseph says, "know yet not that such a man as I am

divineth by divination?" The expression is נַחֵשׁ יְנַחֵשׁ which the Septuagint rendered *literally* οἰωνισμῷ οἰωνεῖται. Now נָחָשׁ and οἰωνὸς are the peculiar words *by which the serpent used in divination was designated*[1].

I hesitated to deliver this conjecture respecting the cup of Joseph in the former edition of this treatise; but the opinion of Mr. Faber kindly communicated to me since its publication has determined me to advance it. He remarks that "the peculiar phraseology of Gen. xliv. 15. implies the worship of the Nachash." I argue, therefore, that the serpent was an object of veneration in Egypt before the Exodus of the Israelites.

Besides the great temple of the serpent-god CNEPH, at Elephantina, there was a celebrated one of Jupiter at Thebes, where the practice of Ophiolatreia was carried to a great length. We are informed, by Herodotus, that "At Thebes there are two serpents, by no means injurious to men; small in size, having two horns springing up from the top of the head. They bury these when dead in the temple of Jupiter: for they say that they are sacred to that God[2]."

[1] Hesychius on οἰωνός. [2] Herod. ii. 74.

Ælian [1] also tells us, that in the time of Ptolemy Euergetes, a very large serpent was kept in the temple of Æsculapius at Alexandria. He also mentions another place in which a live serpent of great magnitude was kept and adored with divine honours. He calls this place MELITE; it ought to be METELE. This latter place is fixed by D'Anville in the Delta, not far from ONUPHIS. This serpent, we are told, had priests and ministers, a table and bowl. The priests, every day, carried into the sacred chamber a cake made of flour and honey, and retired. Returning the next day, they always found the bowl empty. On one occasion, one of the elder priests being extremely anxious to see the sacred serpent, went in alone, and having deposited the cake, retired. When the serpent had ascended the table to his feast, the priest came in, throwing open the door with great violence: upon which the serpent departed in great indignation. But the priest was shortly after seized with a mental malady, and having confessed his crime, became dumb, and wasted away, until he died [2].

Among the prefectures of Egypt, we find one

[1] De Animal. lib. xvi. c. 39.

[2] Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. xi. c. 17.

called ONUPHIS, from the city which was the capital of it: upon which Kircher has the following remark: "In the Coptic language this city was called PIHOF or NOUPHION, which signifies *a serpent*. I think this is the same city as the NOPH of the Hebrews, by which name MEMPHIS was also called. This prefecture is called ONUPHIS, *because here they worshipped the asp;* as Pausanias, when speaking of the worship of animals in Bœotia, says, "*As in the city of Onuphis, in Egypt, they worship the asp.*"

In Montfaucon, plate 46, vol. ii. we have an engraving of an ancient Egyptian marble found at Rome, anno 1709, in which there is a representation of a priest kneeling down before an idol, which, instead of a head of its own, has *three serpents* rising up out of the shapeless block.

In Herwart's tables of Egyptian hieroglyphics, we see a priest *offering adoration to a serpent.* The same occurs in the Isiac table.

That these denoted something more than a mere worship of an idol, is evident from the foregoing instances of actual worship paid to the reptile.

In a tomb at Biban al Malook is a beautiful

painting, descriptive of the rites of Ophiolatreia. The officiating priest is represented with a sword in his hand, and three headless victims are kneeling before an immense serpent. Isis is seen sitting under the arch made by the serpent's body, and the sacred asp, with a human face is behind her, seated on the serpent's tail. This picture proves that the serpent was propitiated by *human victims*.

The art by which the Egyptians charmed snakes, and which is still practised by jugglers in that country and in some parts of Barbary, was probably first learned in the serpent temples. The most celebrated artists were the Psylli of Africa. The charming of serpents is a very old art, and is alluded to by David, *Psalm* lviii. *Jeremiah* viii. 17, and in *Ecclus.* xii. 13.

The stupidity of the Egyptians was in no wise less favourable to this idolatry than the cunning of their priests. Plutarch has recorded an anecdote which confirms the truth of this remark. "I once saw in Egypt two men quarrelling, each of whom, upon the approach of a snake, called him his AGATHODÆMON, and *requested him to embrace his cause*[1]."

[1] Amator, p. 755.

5. Nor did the worship of the serpent in Egypt, any more than in Phœnicia, fly before the face of advancing Christianity, to return no more. The gnostic heretics, as we have seen, united Ophiolatreia with the religion of the cross; and the remains of their superstition were observed in Egypt by Bishop Pococke, when he visited the banks of the Nile. The narrative is so curious, and so apposite to our inquiry, that I cannot be contented with a mere reference to it. "The next day," says the Bishop, "we came to Raigny, where the religious sheikh *of the famous serpent Heredy*, was at the side of the river to meet us . . . . He went with us to the grotto of the serpent, that has been so much talked of under the name of the Sheikh Heredy, of which I shall give a particular account, in order to show the folly, credulity, and superstition of these people; for the Christians have faith in it as well as the Turks. We went ascending between the rocky mountain for half a mile, and came to a part where the valley opens wider. On the right is a mosque, built with a dome over it, against the side of the rock, like a sheikh's burial-place. In it there is a large cleft in the rock, out of

which they say *the serpent* comes. There is a tomb in the mosque, in the Turkish manner; *that*, they say, is the tomb of Heredy; which would make one imagine that one of their saints is buried there, and that they suppose his soul may be in the serpent; for I observed that they went and kissed the tomb with much devotion, and said their prayers at it. Opposite to this cleft there is another, which they say is the tomb of Ogli Hassan, that is, of Hassan the son of Heredy: there are two other clefts, which they say are inhabited by saints or angels. The sheikh told me there were two of these serpents, but the common notion is, that there is only *one*. He said *it had been there ever since the time of Mahomet*. The shape of it is like that of other serpents of the harmless breed. He comes out only during the four summer months, and it is said *that they sacrifice to it*. This the sheikh denied, and affirmed they only brought sheep, lambs, and money, to buy oil for the lamps—*but I saw much blood and entrails of beasts lately killed before the door*. The stories are so ridiculous that they ought not to be repeated, if it were not to give an instance of their idolatry in those parts in this respect;

though the Mahometan religion seems to be very far from it in other things. They say the virtue of this serpent is to cure all diseases of those who go to it, &c. They are also full of a story, that *when a number of women go there once a year, he passes by and looks on them, and goes and twines about the neck of the most beautiful.* . . . . . I was surprised to hear a grave and sensible Christian say that he always cured any distempers, but that worse followed. Aud some Christians really believe that he *works miracles*, and say it is *the devil mentioned in Tobit*, whom the angel Gabriel drove into the utmost parts of Egypt," &c [1].

Bishop Pococke thinks (and justly) that the above superstition is a remnant of the ancient Ophiolatreia. The annual visit of the women is similar to the customs observed in Epirus, and at Lanuvium, of which we shall see a full account in the sequel.

With these notices we close our remarks on the serpent-worship in Egypt; from whence, however, it spread far and wide, until almost every nation of Africa became devoted to the same idolatry.

[1] Pococke, Desc. of East, vol. i.

II. ETHIOPIA.—The superstition of the serpent travelled into Ethiopia, a country whose very name according to Bryant[1], denotes "the land of the solar-serpent worship." Be this as it may, the chronicles of Abyssinia and the local traditions of that country, abundantly establish the Ophiolatreia of the Ethiopians. The first king of Ethiopia is said to have been a *serpent*[2]; he conquered the province of Tigre, and reigned over it. He was called *Arwè*, which in the Abyssinian language meant "a serpent." It is remarkable that the word *Nagash* (which is evidently the same as the *Naig* of Hindûstan, and derived from the Hebrew *Nachash*, a snake) was a title of the ancient Abyssinian kings. The Arabs called them *Nagashi*[3], in the same manner as the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh: and in the writings of our early voyagers, we frequently meet with "the *Negus*" of Abyssinia, a title which sounded strange, and somewhat ludicrous, in English ears.

An Abyssinian monk named Gregory, visited Germany a short time before Ludolf published his "Ethiopic History," and the way in which

[1] Anal. ii. 206. [2] Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist.
[3] Ludolf. lib. ii. c. i. p. 23. 32.

he accounted for the tradition of a "serpent king," is highly interesting. "Being asked about king Arwè, he said, that there was an ancient tradition among his countrymen, that the very early Ethiopians *worshipped a great serpent as a god;* and hence the name of the king *Arwè*, 'a snake.' That this serpent was slain by Angabus, who for this bold deed was elected king, and handed down the throne to his posterity [1]."

The worship of the serpent prevailed at Axum until the Abyssinians were converted to Christianity. The glory of this conversion is ascribed to nine saints, who are reported to have succeeded by the instrumentality of miracles. Ludolf [2] citing father Mendez, thus enumerates their triumphs. "These did great miracles when they converted a great part of Ethiopia; and among others, it is reported that 'a great dragon who lived near Axum, and devoured many men and cattle, was burst asunder by their prayers.' An Abyssinian poet celebrated the praises of these Christian Missionaries, in a poem which Ludolf quotes. The founder of Ophiolatreia, or rather the leader of the first

[1] Ludolf. lib. ii. c. 3. [2] Ludolf. Comment. lib. iii. p. 284.

Ophite Colony into these remote countries, was probably the same Thoth who planted this religion in Phœnicia and Egypt. For we find the word *Tot*, still curiously employed in Abyssinia to denote an *idol*, and what is remarkable, "A naked figure of a man is not a *Tot*; but if he have the head of a *dog* or a *serpent*, instead of a human head, he becomes a *Tot*[1]."

Although the seven Christian saints overcame the Dragon of Axum, they did not succeed in destroying his whole family. The *Shangalla*, a race of Negroes on the northern frontier of Abyssinia, *retain to this day* their primitive superstitions; they worship *serpents*, *trees*, and the heavenly host[2]. And the *Agaazi*, a tribe of Ethiopian shepherds, still dwell in the mountains, called (probably in reference to the Ophite superstitions there practised in former times) *Habab*: which means "*a serpent.*" This word looks very like a reduplication of the universal AB, which was the name of the Serpent-god in most primitive countries which had any connection with Phœnicia.

III. WHIDAH AND CONGO.—The worship of the serpent was not confined to the north-eastern

[1] Bruce, vol. i. 411. [2] Bruce, vol. ii. 554.

portion of Africa. Later discoveries have detected, in other parts of the peninsula, unknown to the ancients, not merely *vestiges*, but the actual existence and practice of Ophiolatreia, in its worst and most degraded forms.

The kingdom of WHIDAH, and the adjacent regions, may have derived their adoration of the serpent from the original settlers. For the negro character of the people is so totally distinct from the features of the Egyptians, or any other known race, that they could have had none, or very little, subsequent intercourse with foreign nations. The serpent-worship of western Africa was, therefore, most probably *aboriginal*; that is, propagated at the same period with that of Egypt and Phœnicia, by the earliest descendants of Ham.

Another argument for its originality may be derived from the purity, or rather unity, of its character. It did not mix itself up, like the superstition of other countries, with the solar worship, of which the serpent was always a favourite and important feature; but displayed itself to the eyes of the first European discoverers in all its nakedness of SERPENT-WORSHIP, retaining only a *name*, which marks the migration of the

sacred serpent from the Euphrates to the Congo; and serves to resolve THE WHOLE OF OPHIOLATREIA into THE FALL OF MAN in Paradise.

The following curious particulars respecting the serpent-worship of Whidah are chiefly extracted from vol. xvi. p. 411, of the "Modern Universal History," which is indebted for its information to the works of De Marchais, Barbot, Atkyns, and Bosman; the last of which may be seen in *Acta Eruditor, Lipsiæ*, 1705, p. 265, under the form of an "*Essay on Guinea.*" In Astley's Collection of Voyages there is also an account compiled from every authority then known; and a very interesting description of the rites and ceremonies connected with this superstition.

The gods of Whidah may be divided into three classes,—*the serpent, tall trees*, and the *sea:* of these the serpent is the most celebrated and honoured, the other two being subordinate to this deity. The snake, which the Whidanese thus honour and worship, is perfectly harmless, and to be seen in all the houses of the natives, leaving its young in their very beds, from which it is the height of impiety to dislodge them.

This serpent they invoke under all the difficulties and emergencies of life. For this pur-

pose they make rich offerings to it of money, silks, live cattle, and indeed all kinds of European or African commodities. The king, especially, at the instigation of the priests, under every national visitation, makes great offerings and entertainments at the serpent's shrine. The most celebrated temple in the kingdom they call "THE SERPENT'S HOUSE;" to which processions and pilgrimages are often made, and victims daily brought, and at which oracles are inquired[1]. Here there is a vast establishment of priests and priestesses, with a pontiff at their head. The priestesses call themselves "*the children of* God," and have their bodies *marked with the figure of the serpent.* The kings of Whidah used formerly to make annual processions to this temple; but the expense was so great, that the sovereign who governed the country when Bosman visited it, discontinued the practice, and gave great offence thereby to the priests, who revenged themselves by procuring his daughter to be *possessed by the serpent*, which is a part of their superstition no less lucrative than atrocious. It was said that the

[1] *Bosman on Guinea, Acta Erud. Lip.* 1705, p. 265.

king countenanced this attack upon his daughter; but, considering the heavy expense in which it would involve him to release her, this is hardly credible. The manner of this practice was the following:—At the time of harvest, the priests of the serpent pretended that their god prowled nightly about the fields in search of victims, which were always females. Whenever he met any of these, he instantly seized them, and upon their shrieks and resistance vanished; but not until he had, by his supernatural influence, *deprived them of the use of reason*. Upon the arrival of their friends, these women were found to be in a frantic state; and being quite beyond control at home, were conveyed to one of the hospitals appointed for this purpose by the king, where they remained under the care of the priests of the serpent until they were cured. This did not take place until their residence in the hospital had swelled the account for board and medical attendance to the highest pitch to which it would be prudent for the priests to carry them. They were then sent back; and whoever mentioned a single circumstance of what had happened in these dens of villany, was secretly poisoned or

dispatched by some violent means. Such deaths, or murders, were always looked upon as the just visitation of the serpent for divulging his mysteries. The fraud of the priests, their menaces and promises, frequently induced the women to accede to their iniquitous designs; and in most cases, *the possession* was a concerted plan between the priest and the woman, to plunder her husband or parents, under the plea of alimony and fees for the miraculous cure.

The traditions of the natives respecting the origin and antiquity of this superstition are curious. They assert that the worship is of very ancient date, and that the first serpent of this sacred species came to them from a foreign and remote country, "where the people pretended to worship him, but were in truth unworthy of his sacred protection, on account of their vices and crimes." Their ancestors, delighted with the preference thus shown to them, received the sacred serpent with every mark of veneration. They carried him in a silken carpet to a temple, and offered him a worship due to his divinity. This venerable snake, the ancestor of those now worshipped in Whidah, they believed *was still alive somewhere, and grown to an enormous bulk.*

The temple which had been prepared for him not being sufficiently splendid, another was built; the same in which he was worshipped when Bosman visited Whidah, anno 1697. So sacred were the descendents of this venerated serpent, that no native, on pain of death, dared injure or molest them, however troublesome or mischievous. Even Europeans were in great danger of massacre, who maltreated any of these holy and domestic gods. An anecdote is recorded by Bosman and Barbot, of the severe revenge taken by the natives on the first English visitors of Guinea, who happened accidentally to meet with and kill one of these snakes in their magazine. The inhabitants, when they heard that the English had destroyed one of their most holy fetiches, set fire to the magazine, and having massacred the unfortunate owners, burnt their bodies and their goods in the same fire. A similar, but a less tragical act of fanaticism was at another time perpetrated, at the instigation of the priests, and by order of the king:—A *hog* having once killed one of the sacred serpents, a thousand Whidanese, armed with swords, were sent through the country, destroying every animal of the proscribed race which they chanced

to meet, until the multitude of these useful and harmless creatures was reduced to a very small number. A seasonable fit of reflection on the part of the king saved the remainder. This anecdote is more interesting to the inquirer into the native superstitions than the former, inasmuch as no feeling but that of religious fanaticism could have given occasion to it; whereas, many hostile feelings might have conspired in their animosity against the English, besides that of vengeance for sacrilege.

Other anecdotes similar to this are told in Astley's Collection of Voyages.

The worship of the snake continued in Whidah until the year 1726, when the country was conquered by the Dahomeys, and the sacred snakes destroyed. The Dahomeys having seized every reptile of this species which they could find, "held them up by the middle, and said to them, '*If you are gods, speak and save yourselves;*'— which the poor snakes not being able to do, the Dahomeys cut their heads off, ripped them open, broiled them, and eat them [1]."

Such is the account of Captain Snellgrave,

[1] Astley, vol. iii. p. 489.

who visited the country three weeks after the event.

The worship of the serpent was derived by the Whidanese from their neighbours, the people of Ardrah; but with them all clue to its origin is lost, except such as I will endeavour presently to trace.

A similar superstition prevailed in the kingdom of Congo, when first visited by the Portuguese. It was reprobated by the Roman Catholic priests, and, at their request, forbidden by an edict of Alphonso, king of Portugal, on pain of death. The following we read in Purchas's Pilgrims, part i. p. 768.

"*The negroes of Congo worshipped serpents, which they fed with their daintiest provisions . . . . . Snakes and adders envenomed their souls with a more deadly poison than they did their bodies.*"

Of the interior of Africa we have had little authentic information until lately; by which time, the irruption of the Mohamedans (Moors and Arabs) had, for the most part, effaced the superstitions of the natives. There are, however, even now, many idolatrous tribes of which we have no account at all. When time and science shall have laid open their superstitions,

we shall probably meet with many more votaries of the sacred serpent in that region of mystery [1].

But from this prospect, perhaps visionary, of future discoveries, let us turn to the knowledge which we already possess of the superstitions of the Gold Coast. We have ascertained that the SERPENT was in reality worshipped there; that temples, priests, and sacrifices were appointed to him; and that there is a tradition, that *this worship came originally from a foreign country.* But, moreover, we are in possession of facts which unequivocally demonstrate WHENCE that worship came.

In the kingdom of Whidah there is still a tribe of people known by the name of EBOES, who are addicted to a worship which may be considered as little more than a variation of Ophiolatreia. They worship the guana, a species of lizard.

[1] The worship of the snake still prevails in CENTRAL AFRICA[1], although in danger of being shortly superseded by Islamism. Among the idols in a temple of the Yaribeans is one with the image of a snake upon his head; which reminds us of the Egyptian priest with the asp of Isis.

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[1] Lander's Records. Preface, and vol. ii. p. 198.

A neighbouring tribe, the KOROMANTYNES, are said to adore a spiritual deity, called OBONI, who is a malicious spirit, pervades heaven, and earth, and sea, and is THE AUTHOR OF ALL EVIL[1].

From these two tribes chiefly were the negroes of Jamaica and the West Indian islands formerly taken; and the addiction of these people to the OBEAH-WORSHIP is well known by melancholy memorials.

The word *obeah* may be the feminine adjective of the substantive *obi*, which, in the native language of the negroes, signifies a CHARM. By means of this charm the professors of Obi, *who were all natives of Africa*, held their unhappy votaries in such awe, that against whomsoever the charm was laid, or as they termed it, "*obi was set*," that person invariably became the victim of his own horror, and died a miserable death. The usual practice was to set this charm (which consisted of several ingredients[2] mixed

[1] Bryan Edwards's Hist. of the West Indies, vol. ii. pp. 75 and 466.

[2] One of these was *crocodiles'* teeth, perhaps a substitute for *serpents'*; the rest were bits of *rags*, *feathers*, &c. A practice somewhat similar to this may be discovered in the

up into the form of a cake) at the door, or in the path of the victim, who having once fixed his eyes upon it, rarely recovered from the shock. An irresistible horror overcame him in an instant; a gradual decay of mind and body ensued, and a few days sufficed to carry him to his grave.

From these premises we may conjecture what relation the Obeah-worship bears to the Ophiolatreia of the ancients. The origin of the terms OBEAH and OBI may be traced to the Canaanitish superstition of the OB or OUB, which Bryant has so ingeniously detected in his remarks upon the witch of Endor[1].

"The woman at Endor," observes Bryant, "who had a familiar spirit, is called אוב, *Oub*,

philtres, or love-charms, of the Greeks and Romans. These consisted, among other things, of *the bones of snakes, screech owls' feathers*, and *bands of wool twisted upon a wheel*[1]."

The connexion of *serpents* and *charms* is noticed by Horace, Epod. v. 14.

Canidia brevibus implicata *viperis*
Crines et incomptum caput, &c. &c.

[1] Anal. vol. i. pp. 59, 60.

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[1] Potter, Archæol. Græca, ii. 251.

or *Ob*; and it is interpreted *Pythonissa*. The *serpent* was also in the Egyptian language called *Ob* or *Aub*. We are told by Horus Apollo, that the basilisk, or royal serpent, was named *oubaios*: it should have been rendered *oubos* for *oubaios* is a possessive, and not a proper name." *Oubos* is, therefore, the name of the serpent *Oub*, with a Greek termination—a practice universally adopted by Grecian writers, when speaking of foreign appellatives. Besides, Kircher remarks, that *Obion* is still, among the people of Egypt, the name of a serpent. "The same occurs in the Coptic Lexicon[1]." OBION, in its original signification, was a sacred title, applied to the solar god, who was symbolized by the serpent OB. It is compounded of OB and ON. ON is a title of the SUN—thus the city of ON, in Egypt, was called by the Greeks *Heliopolis*.

It is observable, that the woman of Endor is called *Oub* or *Ob*; and she was applied to as *oracular*. Similarly, whenever a negro was desirous of detecting a thief, or of recovering lost property, he applied to the *obi-man* or *obi-woman*, for an oracle.

[1] Bryant, ut supra.

The argument that the OBEAH-WORSHIP was originally connected with Ophiolatreia, may be further corroborated by the inferences which result from the following facts:—

1. The natives of Whidah *worshipped the serpent* down to the year 1726.

2. A tribe of the Whidanese is called EBOES; which has the same signification as OBOES—for they may be traced to the same original word אוב, which has successively undergone the variations, *oph*, *ob*, *eph*, *eb*, or *ev*. The term EBOES may, therefore, without any great violence to probability, be interpreted, "the worshippers of EPH."

3. These people (the Eboes) are still addicted to a species of serpent-worship: they worship the guana.

4. A neighbouring tribe, the Koromantynes, adore and propitiate as THE EVIL SPIRIT, a god whom they call OBONI.

From these facts we may infer, that the deity OBONI was the original evil deity of the Negro nations of that part of Africa;—that he was originally worshipped under the symbol of a *serpent*, as his *name* imports; that his peculiar worshippers (perhaps his *priesthood)* were called

Oboes[1];—that the word *oboes* implies worshippers of Ob;—and lastly, that Oboni is no other than the Ophion of Phœnicia, and the Obion of Egypt; each of which was a title of the same solar god, who was symbolized by the serpent Ob. Hence there is room for one of these two inferences; that the Gold Coast was either colonized from Canaan, or from Egypt: the former of which is perhaps the more probable, from the greater facility afforded to the Phœnicians by navigation than to the Egyptians, who would have to cross deserts, and overcome many other physical difficulties in their distant march. The period at which this emigration took place, must be referred to a very remote age, not only because of the totally distinct physical characteristics of the Negroes, but also of the *simplicity* of their worship. They had neither the multitudinous host of the Egyptian Pantheon, nor the absorbing adoration of the Syrian goddess: they had neither mythology nor image-

[1] The name of the king of the Eboes in 1831 was Obi. The people described by Lander are far less barbarous than the Eboes of Edwards. The Slave Trade, which generally barbarizes Europeans, appears in this instance to have conferred a comparative civilization upon Africans.

worship[1]; but preserved the simple, original veneration of the serpent in his *living form*. The name of the evil deity, OBONI, it is true, indicates a relation to the solar worship; but as they had neither obelisks nor pyramids, nor any of the other adjuncts of this peculiar religion, it is probable that the name OBONI was introduced at a later period. However that may be, it is certain that the worship of the serpent prevailed in this part of Africa from the earliest times.

That the Koromantynes should worship Oboni as a *spirit*, while the Eboes, or Oboes, adored him under the emblem of the guana, and so degraded mental into sensual worship, is by no means surprising. For while history represents the Koromantynes as a peculiarly quick and noble-minded race, it describes the Eboes as the most degraded among the Negro tribes, apparently susceptible of no generous feeling[1]. It was therefore to be expected that the Koromantynes would first emancipate themselves from the superstition of their common ancestors. Hence,

[1] Their only idol—if it may be called one—was the *Argoye*, a human figure crowned with *serpents* and *lizards*. It was a subordinate fetiche.

Bryan Edwards, ut supra.

while their religion became more intellectual, that of the Eboes would retain its original character, with very little change; *especially*, if these were (as there is reason to suppose) the descendants of the *priesthood*. So that while the former would worship OBONI as a *spirit*, the latter would worship him under his emblem the *guana*.

In one respect, however, (and it is an important and very remarkable coincidence of opinion,) they agreed. The Eboes affirmed that *the most acceptable offering* at the shrine of the guana was a HUMAN VICTIM: and the Koromantynes maintained, that when OBONI was angry, nothing could appease him but a HUMAN SACRIFICE! So striking a coincidence as this cannot but remind us of the great and eternal truth, that victory over the *serpent* could only be obtained by the "WOMAN'S SEED:" and it is another link in the chain of the universal faith, that before mankind could be reconciled to GOD—"IT WAS EXPEDIENT THAT ONE MAN SHOULD DIE FOR THE PEOPLE[1]."

With these remarks I take leave of Africa—a

[1] John xviii. 14.

country in which the serpent was remarkably venerated. The course of the Nile—the shores of the Mediterranean—the coasts of Guinea—and even Central Africa itself, furnish proofs of the prevailing idolatry; and many tribes, even yet unknown, may probably be discovered which uphold the same superstition. Thus Africa, which remains a mystery to the geographer, and little more than a sandy desert to the merchant, maybe a mine of knowledge to the Christian scholar, who believes the Scriptures, and expects the promises of God.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER III.

SERPENT-WORSHIP IN EUROPE.

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I. GREECE.—Whether the learned and ingenious Bryant[1] be correct or not, in deriving the very name of EUROPE from אור־אב (AUR-AB), the *solar serpent*, it is certain that Ophiolatreia prevailed in this quarter of the globe at the earliest period of idolatry[2].

Of the countries of Europe, Greece was first colonized by Ophites, but at separate times, both from Egypt and Phœnicia; and it is a question of some doubt, though perhaps of little importance, whether the leader of the first colony, the celebrated Cadmus, was a Phœnician or an Egyptian. Bochart has shown that Cadmus

[1] Faber approves this derivation.—*Cabiri*, vol. i. 180.

[2] The first inhabitants of Europe are said to have been the offspring of a woman, partly of the human, and partly of the dracontic figure, a tradition which alludes to their Ophite origin.

was the leader of the *Canaanites* who fled before the arms of the victorious Joshua; and Bryant has proved that he was an *Egyptian*, identical with THOTH. But as mere names of individuals are of no importance, when all agree that the same superstition existed contemporaneously in the two countries, and since Thoth is declared by Sanchoniathon to have been the father of the Phœnician as well as Egyptian Ophiolatreia; we may endeavour, without presumption, to reconcile the opinions of these learned authors, by assuming each to be right in his own line of argument; and by *generalizing* the name CADMUS, instead of appropriating it to individuals. By the word CADMUS, therefore, we may understand the leader of the CADMONITES, whether of Egypt or Phœnicia. There would, consequently, be as many persons of this name, as colonies of this denomination.

The first appearance of these idolaters in Europe is mythologically described under the fable of "Cadmus and Europa;" according to which, the former came in search of the latter, who was his sister, and had been carried off to Europe by Jupiter in the form of a bull.

If EUROPA be but a personification of the

SOLAR SERPENT-WORSHIP, and CADMUS a leader of serpent-worshippers, the whole fable is easily solved.

Europa was carried by Jupiter to Crete, where she afterwards married ASTERIUS: that is, the SOLAR SERPENT-WORSHIP was established in Crete, and afterwards united with the worship of the HEAVENLY HOST: *Asterius* being derived from ἀστὴρ, *a star*.

For the explanation of that portion of the fable which relates to the BULL, the reader is referred to Bryant, Anal. vol. ii. 455, who thinks that it bore an allusion to the god APIS of Egypt, by whose oracular advice the migration was undertaken. A similar worship, however, prevailed in Syria; for we find that the Phœnician Cadmus, *(Cadmus the son of Phœnix)*, when he went in search of his sister, followed a cow. This latter colony is said to have settled in Eubœa; to which they gave the name of their tutelary deity, AUB; for *Eubœa* is, according to Bryant, AUB-AIA, "the land of AUB[1]."

The history of Cadmus is full of fables about serpents. He slew a dragon, planted its teeth, and hence arose armed men, who destroyed

[1] Anal. ii. 206.

each other until five only remained. These assisted him in building the city of THEBES. One of these five builders of Thebes was named after the serpent-god of the Phœnicians, OPHION.

Cadmus, and his wife Harmonia, finished their travels at Encheliæ in Illyricum, where, instead of dying a natural death, they were *changed into serpents.* This conclusion of the story throws a light upon the whole. *The leader of these Ophites after death was deified, and adored under the symbol of a serpent.* He became, in fact, the SERPENT-GOD of the country, as Thoth had become the serpent-god of Egypt. Having been the author, he became the object of the idolatry.

Besides the Cadmian colony, which settled chiefly in Bœotia, a second irruption of Ophites is noticed in history, as coming from Egypt under the guidance of CECROPS. These took possession of Attica, and founded Athens, whose first name was, in consequence, CECROPIA. In this word, also, we trace the involution of the name OB, or OPS, the serpent-god of antiquity; and accordingly, Cecrops[1] himself is said to

[1] Allwood, Lit. Antiq. of Greece, p. 259, derives the name Cecrops from *Ca-cur-ops*, "*The Temple of the Supreme*

have been of twofold form, *human* and *serpentine*[1]. It was also said, that from a serpent he was changed into a man[2]. We read too of DRACO (Δράκων, *a dragon*) being the first king of Athens. All these relate to the introduction of serpent-worship from Egypt into Attica, the leader of which colony, by a fabulous metonyme, was called a "*dragon*," or *serpent*. The *first* altar erected by Cecrops at Athens, was to OPS, the serpent-deity[3]; a circumstance which confirms the inference deduced by Bryant; namely, that he introduced Ophiolatreia into Attica. Cecrops and Draco were probably the same person.

2. The symbolical worship of the serpent was so common in Greece, that Justin Martyr accuses the Greeks of introducing it into the mysteries of all their gods.

OPS." *Ca-cur-ops*, with the use of the Attic dialect, and by contraction would become *Ce-c'r-ops*. From the temple he thinks originated the legend of Cecrops, through the common transmutation of temples into deities, in mythological history.

[1] Bryant, ii. 210, citing Apollodorus.

[2] Ibid. p. 211, citing Eustathius.

[3] Macrob. Saturnal. lib. i. c. x. p. 162.

Παρὰ παντὶ τῶν νομιζομένων παρ' ὑμῖν θεῶν Ὄφις σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον ἀναγράφεται [1].

This was especially true in regard to the mysteries of Bacchus. The people who assisted at them were crowned with serpents, and carried them in their hands, brandishing them over their heads, and shouting with great vehemence, ευια, ευια [2]; "which being roughly aspirated," remarks Clemens Alexandrinus, "will denote the female serpent [3]." A consecrated serpent was a sign of the Bacchic orgies [4]; a very important part of which consisted in a procession of noble virgins, carrying in their hands golden baskets, which contained sesamum, *small pyramids*, wool, *honey-cakes*, (having raised lumps upon them like *navels*), grains of salt, and A SERPENT [5].

Three ingredients in these baskets are remark-

[1] Apolog. lib. i. p. 60.

[2] Some of the ancient fathers supposed that the word ευια was an ejaculation of the name EVE; and (the serpent being simultaneously held up) that the whole of the orgies were a celebration of the fall of the first woman.

[3] Apud. Euseb. P. E. 64.

[4] Ibid. 62.

[5] Clemens Alex. cited by Castellan, apud Gronov. 643.

able, as connected with THE WORSHIP OF THE SOLAR SERPENT.

1. *The pyramids*, which were intended as representations of the *sun's rays*, and are sometimes seen in the hands of priests kneeling before the sacred serpent of Egypt[1]. The supplicating minister of the god offers a pyramid in his left hand, while the right is held up in adoration. On his head is the deadly asp.

2. *The honey-cakes marked with the sacred omphalos.* These were also offerings made at the shrine of the sacred serpent; for we read in Herodotus, that in the Acropolis at Athens was kept a serpent who was considered the guardian of the city. He was fed on *cakes of honey once a month*[2]. The serpent of Metele was presented with the same food or offering[3].

Medicated cakes, in which honey was a chief ingredient, were at once the food and the offering to the dragon of the Hesperides—

——— Sacerdos
Hesperidum templi custos, *epulasque draconi*

[1] No. 4. room ix. Egypt. Antiq. in the British Museum.

[2] viii. 41.

[3] See "Ophiolatreia in Egypt."

Quæ dabat, et sacros servabat in arbore ramos,
Spargens *humida mella*, soporiferumque papaver.
Virgil, Æn. iv. 483.

A similar offering was made to Cerberus, by the prophetess who conducted Æneas—

Cui vates horrere videns jam colla *colubris*
Melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam
Objicit ———

Æn. vi. 419.

Honey cakes were also carried by the initiated into the cave of Trophonius to appease the guardian serpents[1]. So that this offering was universally peculiar to Ophiolatreia.

The honey-cake, however, when properly prepared, was marked with the sacred *Omphalos* —a remarkable peculiarity on which it may be proper to make a few observations.

The superstition of the Omphalos was extensively prevalent. It entered into the religions of India and Greece, and is one of the most figurative and obscure parts of mythology. The omphalos is a boss, upon which is described a spiral line; but whether or not this spiral line may have been originally designed to represent

[1] Philostratus, Vita Apollon. l. viii. c. 15.

a coiled serpent, I will not pretend to determine; though such a meaning has been affixed to it by an ingenious writer[1] upon the antiquities of New Grange in Ireland. In describing similar lines upon some rude stones discovered at this place, he tells us, "they appear to be the representations of serpents coiled up, and probably were symbols of the Divine being." "Quintus Curtius confirms this hypothesis, when he says, that the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Africa had a rude stone, whereon was drawn a spiral line, the symbol of the deity."

Whatever may have been the meaning of this spiral line, which Quintus Curtius calls a *navel*, one thing is evident, that the *omphalos*, *umbilicus*, or *navel*, was *sacred to the serpent-god:* for it not only occurs in the mystic baskets of the Bacchic orgies, but was also kept at DELPHI[2], "*because*," says Pausanias, "*this was the middle of the earth.*" The absurdity of this notion at once refers us to some better reason; but absurd as it is, the same idea seems to have

[1] *Beauford* in Vallancey's Collectan. de reb. Hibern. vol. ii. p. 174.

[2] Strabo, lib. vi. Pausan. lib. 10. Pindar, Pyth. Ode iv. and vi.

prevailed generally; for we read of an omphalos of the Peloponnesus at Phlius, in Achaia: "*if it be as they say*," adds the incredulous topographer[1].

Near the latter omphalos was a temple of BACCHUS, another of APOLLO, and another of ISIS, to each of which deities the serpent was sacred. The sacred omphalos, therefore, would seem to bear very much upon the adoration of the serpent; and *it is a question* whether or not it was originally intended to represent a *coiled serpent as symbolical of divinity*.

The esoteric tradition of the omphalos, according to Diodorus[1], is, that when the infant Jupiter was nursed by the Curetes, his *navel* fell at the river Triton in Crete; whence that territory was called *Omphalos*. But this legend is evidently invented from the ambiguity of the word. Bryant derives *omphalos* from OMPHIEL, "*the oracle of the sun*[2]." Such an oracle would not be unaptly represented by a coiled serpent, a serpent being the most popular emblem of the sun, and also of an oracle.

3. The third feature, and the most remarkable

[1] Pausan. lib. ii. p. 109. [2] Lib. v. s. 70.

[2] Anal. i. 307.

of all, in the Bacchic orgies, was the mystic SERPENT. This was, undoubtedly, the σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον of the festival. The MYSTERY of religion was, throughout the world, concealed in a *chest* or *box*. As the Israelites had their sacred ark, every nation upon earth had some holy receptacle for sacred things and symbols. The story of Ericthonius is illustrative of this remark. He was the fourth king of Athens, and his body terminated in the tails of *serpents*, instead of human legs. He was placed by Minerva in a *basket*, which she gave to the daughters of CECROPS, with strict injunctions not to open it. Here we have a fable made out of the simple fact of *the mysterious basket*, in which the sacred serpent was carried at the orgies of Bacchus. The whole legend relates to Ophiolatreia.

In accordance with the general practice, the worshippers of Bacchus carried in their consecrated baskets or chests, the MYSTERY of their God, together with the offerings.

Catullus, (*Nuptiæ Pel. et Thetidis*, 256,) in describing these Bacchanals, says :

> Pars sese tortis serpentibus incingebant,
> Pars obscura cavis celebrabant orgia cistis.

The *contents* of the basket were, therefore, the MYSTERY; and especially *the serpent*. Archbishop Potter says as much: "In these consisted *the most mysterious part of the solemnity*;" but he adds, inconsiderately, "*and therefore to amuse the common people* (!) serpents were put into them, which sometimes crawling out of their places, astonished the beholders[1]." Whatever might have been the astonishment of the beholders, that of the priests would not have been little, to have been told that their sacred serpent, the σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον, was nothing more than a device to amuse the common people.

It is observable that the Christian Ophites, who were of the school of the Egyptian gnostics, kept their sacred serpent in a *chest*; and the orgies of Bacchus were derived from the same source of Egyptian gnosticism—the mysteries of Isis.

So great was the veneration of the Cretans for their Bacchic baskets, that they frequently stamped the figures of them upon their coins. Nor were these baskets confined to the orgies of Bacchus. They were employed also in the mysteries of Ceres, Isis, and Osiris[2].

[1] Archæol. Græc. ii. 383. 9th *Edit.* [2] Montfaucon, i. 164.

Another custom of the Bacchantes is remarkable for its connexion with Ophiolatreia. After the banquet, they were accustomed to carry round a cup, which they called "the cup of the good dæmon." "Ingenti clamore BONUM DEUM invocant venerantes Bacchum, cujus quoque in memoriam POCULUM, sublatis mensis, circumferunt, quod poculum BONI DÆMONIS appellant [1]."

The symbol of the "good dæmon" was a serpent, as may be proved from a medal of the town of Dionysopolis, in Thrace. On one side of the coin were the heads of Gordian and Serapis, on the other a *coiled serpent* [2]. Dionysopolis was named from Dionusus, a name which was borne by the Indian Bacchus, who in his own country was called *Deonaush.*

In the collection of the Earl of Besborough, was a beautiful antique drinking cup cut out of a solid piece of rock crystal, on the lid of which are two serpents, and upon the cup near the rim, the Ophite hierogram in the form of a Medusa's head. Mr. Pownall, in the seventh volume of the Archæologia, proves that this cup was consecrated to religious uses; and supposes

[1] Nicol de ritu Bacch. apud Gronov. vii. 186. [2] Ibid.

that it might have been employed in drinking to the Tria Numina, after a feast. One of the "Tria Numina" was called AGATHODÆMON. I conjecture therefore, that this was the "poculum Boni Dæmonis," used in the Bacchanalian mysteries.

The following lines from Martial, prove that the impress of a *serpent* upon a cup, was a sign of consecration :—

> Cælatus tibi cum sit Ammiane
> *Serpens in paterâ* Myronis arte,
> Vaticana bibis!
>
> Lib. vi. Epig. 92.

The serpent entered into the symbolical worship of many others of the Grecian deities.

Minerva was sometimes represented with a dragon; her statues by Phidias were decorated with this emblem [1]. In plate, p. 85, vol. i. of Montfaucon, are several medals of Minerva; in one of them she holds a *caduceus* in the right hand; in another, a staff, round which a serpent is twisted; in a third, a large serpent appears marching before her. Other medals represent her crest as composed of a serpent. So that this was a notorious emblem of the

[1] Gesner, Hist. Anim. lib. v. p. 84.

goddess of WISDOM: *so* applied, perhaps, from a legendary memorial of "the subtilty" which the serpent displayed in Paradise; whereas, his attribution to the god of DRUNKENNESS may be accounted for from a traditionary recollection of the prostration of mind sustained by our first parents, through communion with the serpent tempter.

The city of Athens was peculiarly consecrated to the goddess Minerva; and in the Acropolis was kept a live serpent, who was generally considered as the guardian of the place. The emperor Hadrian built a temple at Athens to Jupiter Olympius, and "placed in it a dragon which he caused to be brought from India[1]." Upon the walls of Athens was sculptured a Medusa's head, whose hair was *intertwined with snakes*. In the temple of Minerva, at Tegea, there was a similar sculpture, which was said to have been given by the goddess herself, to preserve that city from being taken in war[2]. The virtue supposed to reside in this head was of a talismanic power, to preserve or destroy.

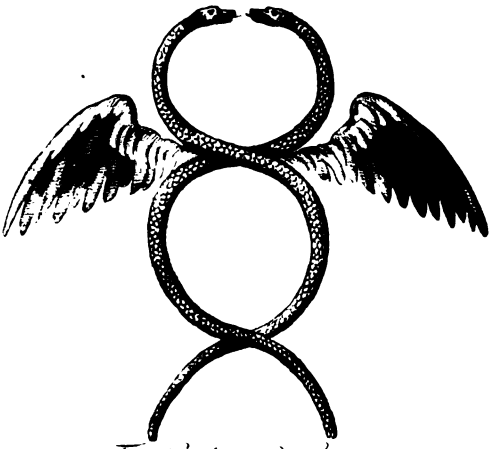
[1] Xiphilin. Rom. Hist. Script. iii. 358.

[2] Pausan. lib. viii. p. 531. Edit. Hanoviæ 1613.

The same author [1] who records the preceding fact, tells us of a priestess, who, going into a sanctuary of Minerva in the dead of the night, saw a vision of that goddess, who held up her mantle, upon which was impressed a Medusa's head. The sight of this fearful talisman instantaneously converted the intruder into *stone*. The same Gorgon or Medusa's head, was on the ægis and breastplate of the goddess [2], to induce a terrific aspect in the field of battle. The *terror* resided in the *snakes;* for the face of Medusa was "*mild* and *beautiful* [3]." From some such notion of a talismanic power, perhaps, the Argives, Athenians, and Ionians, after the taking of Tanagra from the Lacedæmonians, erected a statue of victory in the grove of Jupiter Olympius, on whose shield was engraved *a Medusa's head* [4]. The same symbolical figure may be frequently seen on sepulchral urns. This general impression of a powerful charm inherent in the Gorgon, must be attributed to some forgotten tradition respecting the *serpents* in the hair; for all agree that the face of Medusa was far from

[1] Paus. lib. ix. p. 593.
[2] Virgil, viii. 435.
[3] Montfaucon, i. 88.
[4] Paus. lib. v. 304.

Medusa's Head from Montfaucon.



The Ophite Hieroglyph.

being

the original design of the Medusa's Head

commonly borne inverted the tails returning into the circle.

London Published by J.G. & F. Rivington St. Pauls Church Yard, & Waterloo Place: 1833.

being terrific. Some engravings of this head, preserved in Montfaucon, explain the mystery. From these we may infer, that this celebrated talisman was no other than the still more celebrated emblem of consecration, the CIRCLE, WINGS, and SERPENT; whose history, use, and probable origin we considered in the first chapter of this treatise. In the plate in Montfaucon, above referred to [1], are representations of Medusa's head, from either side of whose forehead proceeds a WING; and TWO SERPENTS, intersecting one another below the chin in a *nodus Herculis*, appear *over* the forehead, looking at each other.

Take away the human face in the centre, with its remaining snaky locks, and you have the Egyptian emblem of consecration, THE SERPENTS AND WINGED CIRCLE; the circle being formed by the bodies of the snakes. The Gorgon is, therefore, nothing more than THE CADUCEUS *without its staff*.

The intimate connexion of this emblem with the serpent-worship, we have already observed: and it is worthy of remark, that the *Argives*,

[1] Montf. i. 88.

Athenians, and *Ionians*, who erected the statue of victory at Tanagra with a Gorgon-shield, were descendants of *serpent worshippers*.

This celebrated hierogram of the Ophites was painted on the shield of Perseus, an *Argive*, who was distinguished by the device of "Medusa's head." And Hippomedon, *an Argive also*, one of the seven chiefs before Thebes[1], bore the same hierogram, if I rightly understand these lines of Æschylus :—

Ὄφεων δὲ πλεκτάναισὶ περίδρομον κύτος
Προσηδάφισται κοιλογάστορος κύκλου.
Ἑπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβας. 501, 502.

The poet is describing the devices upon the shields of the besiegers, and the above are the "armorial bearings" of Hippomedon. "*The hollow circumference* of the concave shield was *carried towards the ground* (προσηδάφισται) in the folds of serpents." By which I understand the poet to mean, that the centre of the shield was a little raised, and *a circular cavity* ran round between it and the rim of the shield. In this cavity

[1] Alcmaon also, who was present at this siege, was distinguished by the cognizance of a *serpent* upon his shield.—*Pindar Pythia*, 8.

(towards the lower part of it) were folded serpents —which would accurately describe the ophite hierogram [1]; the raised part of the shield representing the mystic circle or globe—for we must observe, that the shield was "*hollow-bellied;*" i. e. *concave to the bearer;* and, consequently, *convex* to the enemy.

The people of Argos had a tradition which indicates *their* ophite origin also. The city was said to have "been infested with serpents, until Apis came from Egypt and settled in it. To him they attribute the blessing of having their country freed from this evil; but the brood came from the very quarter from whence Apis was supposed to have come. They were certainly Hivites from Egypt [2]."

The breastplate and baldrick of Agamemnon, king of Argos, exhibited the device of a *triple-headed serpent* [3]. His brother Menelaus, king of Sparta, was similarly distinguished by a serpent upon his shield. The Spartans, as well as the Athenians, believed in their serpentine origin, and called themselves *ophiogenæ*.

[1] See ch. i. "Ophiolatreia in Persia." *Plate.*

[2] Bryant, Anal. ii. 212.

[3] Homer, Iliad, Λ. 38.

In Argolis, moreover, was the town of Epidaurus, famous for the temple of Æsculapius, where that god was worshipped under the symbol of a serpent. We read in Pausanias[1] that live serpents were kept here, and fed regularly by servants, who laid their food upon the floor, but dared not approach the sacred reptiles. This must have been only through *religious* awe; for the serpents of Epidaurus were said to be *harmless*[2]. The statue of Æsculapius at this temple, represented him leaning upon a staff, and resting one hand upon the head of a serpent[3]. His sister, the goddess Hygeia, was represented with a large serpent twisted about her, and drinking out of a chalice in her hand. Sometimes it was coiled up in her lap; at others, held in the hand[4].

The serpent was sacred to Æsculapius and Hygeia, as a symbol of *health;* but *how* he came to be a symbol of health is not very satisfactorily explained. It is said by Pliny, that the flesh of this creature is sometimes used in medicine, and that *this* was the reason of his consecration to "health." Others again inform us, that the

[1] Paus. lib. ii. 106.
[2] Pausan. lib. ii. 136.
[3] Montf. i. 180.
[4] Ibid. 181.

serpent changes his skin periodically, and thus becomes an emblem of renewed vigour in a sick man. These, however, can only be considered as the surmises of a warm imagination [1]. The use of animals of the reptile kind in medicine was not confined to the serpent; or, if it were, from whence could *the idea itself* originate, that the serpent's flesh was sanatory? The changing of his skin being *periodical*, can scarcely denote recovered health, which is seldom renewed at given intervals. In the absence of every other probable reason, we may refer this notion to the *effect* produced upon Adam and Eve, when, at the instigation of THE SERPENT, they "took and ate," and "*their eyes were opened.*" Another derivation has indeed been assigned, which has much plausibility attached to it; but chronology confutes the opinion. Many authors have believed that the erection of the brazen serpent in the wilderness by Moses, might have given cause for the attribution of the serpent to the

[1] It must be confessed, however, that this notion made a very strong impression upon antiquity—for "to eat snakes" became a proverb, denoting a man's feeding on what renewed his vigour.

god of health; especially as he is represented very often, under this character, encircling a stick or pole in the hand of Æsculapius. I acknowledge the affinity of the ideas; but being persuaded that the Æsculapian worship was of Egyptian origin, and having already shown from *Wisdom*, ch. xi. ver. 15, that the worship of the serpent prevailed in Egypt *before* the Exodus of the Israelites, I cannot believe that an Egyptian superstition owes its beginning to any incident in Israelitish history.

A tradition is recorded by Pausanias[1] of one Nicagora, the wife of Echetimus, who conveyed the god Æsculapius to Sicyon under the form of a serpent. The Sicyonians erected statues to him; one of which represented a woman sitting upon a serpent. An anecdote of the deportation of Æsculapius to Rome, similar to the preceding, is related by Livy, Ovid, Florus, Valerius Maximus, and Aurelius Victor. From whom it appears, that a pestilence having arisen in Rome, the oracle of Delphi advised an embassy to Epidaurus, to fetch the god Æsculapius; Quintus Ogulnius

[1] Paus. lib. ii. 103.

and ten others were accordingly sent with the humble supplications of the senate and people of Rome. While they were gazing in admiration at the superb statue of the god, a serpent, "venerable, not horrible," which rarely appeared but when he intended to confer some extraordinary benefit, glided from his lurking place; and having passed through the city, went directly to the Roman vessel, and coiled himself up in the berth of Ogulnius. The ambassadors, "carrying the god," set sail; and being off Antium, the serpent leaped into the sea, and swam to the nearest temple of Apollo, and after a few days returned. But when they entered the Tiber, he leaped upon an island, and disappeared. Here the Romans erected a temple to him in the shape of a ship; and the plague was stayed "with wonderful celerity."

Ovid, (*Met.* 15, 665,) gives an animated description of this embassy, which is well worthy of attention, as illustrative of the deification of the serpent.

Postera sidereos aurora fugaverat ignes;
Incerti quid agant proceres, ad templa petiti
Conveniunt operosa Dei: quaque ipse morari
Sede velit, signis cœlestibus indicet, orant.

Vix bene desierant cùm cristis aureus altis
In SERPENTE DEUS prænuntia sibila misit:
Adventuque suo signumque arasque foresque
Marmoreumque solum, fastigiaque aurea movit:
Pectoribusque tenus mediâ sublimis in æde
Constitit; atque oculos circumtulit igne micantes.
Territa turba pavet, *cognovit* NUMINA custos,
Evinctus vittâ crines albente sacerdos.
Et "DEUS en! DEUS en! linguisque animisque favete
Quisquis ades," dixit. "Sis, O pulcherrime, visus
Utiliter: *populosque juves* TUA SACRA *colentes.*"

The god having passed through the temple and city, arrives at the port:

Restitit hic; agmenque suum, turbæque sequentis
Officium placido visus dimittere vultu,
Corpus in Ausoniâ posuit rate.

When the vessel entered the Tiber, the whole city of Rome was poured out to meet the god:

Obvia turba ruit————
————lætoque clamore salutant.
Quaque per adversas navis cita ducitur undas,
Thura super ripas, arisque ex ordine factis,
Parte ab utraque sonant: et adorant aëra fumis,
Ictaque conjectos incalfacit hostia cultros.

These spirited lines alone, without any other

support from history, would prove the extent to which the worship of the serpent was carried by the ancients.

The incarnation of deity in a serpent was not an uncommon event in Grecian mythology. We read of Olympias, Nicotelea, and Aristodamia, mothers, of Alexander, Aristomenes, and Aratus, respectively, by some god who had changed himself into the form of a serpent[1]. The conversion of Jupiter and Rhea into snakes, gave occasion to a fable respecting the origin of the Caduceus; which is so far pertinent to our theory, that it implies the *divine character* of those sacred serpents, which formed in that talisman the circle and crescent.

Jupiter again metamorphosed himself into a dragon, to deceive Proserpine. These, and all other similar fables in mythology, are founded upon the deception of Eve by a SPIRITUAL BEING, who assumed the form of a serpent.

Dragons were sacred to the goddess Ceres; her car was drawn by them.

They were symbolical also of the Ephesian Diana, and of Cybele, the mother of the gods,

[1] Pausan. lib. iv. 243.

as we may see in the engravings of Montfaucon [1].

Of all the places in Greece, Bœotia seems to have been the most favourite residence of the Ophites. The Thebans boasted themselves to be the descendants of the warriors who sprung from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus. "The history of this country," says Bryant, "had continual reference to serpents and dragons; they seem to have been the national insigne at least of Thebes. Hence we find upon the tomb of Epaminondas, the figure of a serpent, to signify that he was an Ophite or Theban [2]." In like manner the Theban Hercules bore upon his shield the sacred hierogram by which the warriors of the Cadmian family were distinguished —"As he went, his adamantine shield sounded ..... *in a* CIRCLE TWO DRAGONS *were suspended, lifting up their heads* [3]."

At Thespiæ, in Bœotia, they worshipped Jupiter Saotas; the origin of whose worship is thus related:—"When A DRAGON had once laid waste the town, Jupiter directed that

[1] Vol. i.

[2] Anal. ii. 465, citing Pausanias.

[3] Hesiod, cited by Stukeley, *Abury*, 69.

every year a young man, chosen by lot, should be offered to THE SERPENT. The lot fell at length on Cleostrus, when his friend, Menestratus, having made a brazen breastplate and studded it with hooks, put it on, and presented himself to the dragon. Thus they both perished together. From that time the Thespians erected an altar to Jupiter Saotas[1]."

But the most celebrated seat of Ophiolatreia in Greece was at DELPHI. The original name of this place, according to Strabo, was PYTHO; supposed to be so called from the serpent PYTHON, slain there by Apollo. The connexion of such a legend with the place, and the derivation of its original name from the serpent Python, which is thought to be the PETHEN of the Hebrews, might well induce the learned Heinsius to conclude that "the god Apollo was first worshipped at Delphi, under the symbol of a serpent." Hyginus[2] says, that the dragon Python formerly *gave oracles* in Mount Parnassus —"PYTHON, Terræ filius, draco ingens. Hic ante Apollinem *ex oraculo* in monte Parnasso *responsa dare* solitus erat." The same says

[1] Hoffman, Lexicon. [2] Fab. 140.

Ælian[1]; and Plutarch[2] affirms, that the contest between Apollo and Python was respecting *the oracle.* "Python was, therefore, in reality, the deity of the place[3]."

The public assemblies at Delphi were called *Pythia.* These were doubtless, originally intended for the adoration of Python[4]. *Seven days* after the victory of Apollo over Python, the Pythian games were instituted, on the *seventh day* of which, an hymn called Pæan was sung to Apollo in honour of his victory[5]. Hence the expression of Hesiod—ἕβδομον ἱερὸν ἦμαρ—which so singularly corresponds with our sabbath.

When the priestess of Apollo delivered her oracles, she stood, or sat, upon a *tripod.* This was a name commonly given to any sort of vessel, seat, or table, supported upon three feet. The tripod of the Pythian priestess was distinguished by a base emblematical of her god. It was a *triple-headed serpent* of brass, whose body,

[1] Var. Hist. lib. iii. c. 1. [2] De defectu Orac. i. 417.

[3] Bryant, ii. 147. The same is intimated by Hyginus (Introd. Fab.) when he calls Python, "*Draco divinus.*"

[4] Euseb. P. E. 72.

[5] Stukeley, Abury, 69, citing Proleg. to Pindar. Pyth.

folded in circles growing wider and wider towards the ground, formed a *conical column*. The *cone*, it should be remembered was sacred to the solar deity. The three heads were disposed triangularly, in order to sustain the three feet of the tripod, which was of gold. Herodotus [1] tells us, that it was consecrated to Apollo by the Greeks, out of the spoils of the Persians after the battle of Platæa. He describes it accurately. Pausanias [2], who mentions it also, omits the fact of the three heads. He records a tradition of a *more ancient* tripod, which was carried off by the Tyrinthian Hercules, but restored by the son of Amphitryon. An engraving of the serpentine column of the Delphic tripod may be seen in Montfaucon, vol. ii. p. 86. The golden portion of this tripod was carried away by the Phocians when they pillaged the temple of Delphi; an outrage which involved them in the sacred war which terminated in their ruin. The Thebans, who were the foremost among the avengers of Delphi, were the most notorious Ophites of antiquity.

Athenæus calls this tripod, "*the tripod of*

[1] ix. 81. [2] Lib. x. p. 633.

truth[1]," —a most singular perversion of the fact upon which the oracle was founded—the conversation of the serpent in Paradise.

According to Gibbon, the serpentine column was transported from Delphi to Constantinople, by the founder of the latter city, and set up on a pillar in the Hippodrome[2]. He cites Zosimus, who is also cited by Montfaucon on the same subject: but the latter thinks that Constantine only caused a *similar* column to be made, and did not remove the original from Delphi. It is most probable, however, that Gibbon is right[3].

This celebrated relic of Ophiolatreia is still to be seen in the same place, where it was set up by Constantine; but one of the serpents' heads is mutilated. This was done by Mahomet the second, the Turkish conqueror of Constantinople, when he entered the city. The story is thus related by Leunclavius:—"When Mahomet came to the Atmeidan, he saw there a stone column, on which was placed a three-headed brazen serpent. Looking on it, he asked, '*What idol is that?*' and at the same time, hurling his

[1] Montf. ii. 86.

[2] Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp. iii. 21.

[3] See Gibbon's *note*.

iron mace with great force, knocked off the lower jaw of one of the three serpents' heads. *Upon which, immediately, a great number of serpents began to be seen in the city.* Whereupon some advised him to leave that serpent alone from henceforth; since *through that image it happened that there were no serpents in the city.* Wherefore that column remains to this day. And although, *in consequence of the lower jaw of the brazen serpent being struck off, some serpents do come into the city,* YET *they do no harm to any one*[1]."

This traditionary legend, preserved by Leunclavius, marks the strong hold which Ophiolatreia must have taken upon the minds of the people of Constantinople, so as to cause this story to be handed down to so late an æra as the seventeenth century. Among the Greeks who resorted to Constantinople were many idolaters of the old religion, who would wilfully transmit any legend favourable to their own superstition. Hence, probably, the charm mentioned above, was attached by them to the Delphic serpent on the column in the Hippodrome; and revived (after the partial mutilation of the figure) by their descendants, the common

[1] Annales Turcici, s. 130.

people, who are always the last in every country to forget or forego an ancient superstition. Among the common people of Constantinople, there were always many more pagans than Christians at heart. With the Christian religion, therefore, which they professed, would be mingled many of the pagan traditions which were attached to the monuments of antiquity that adorned Byzantium, or were imported into Constantinople.

There is another kind of serpentine tripod, which is supposed to have belonged to Delphi, usually represented on medals. This is a vase supported on three brazen legs, round one of which is twined a serpent [1].

Lucian [2] says, that "*the dragon under the tripod spoke* [3]." This was, very probably, the

[1] Montf. ii. 86.

[2] *De Astrolog.* cited by Bulenger de Orac. apud Gronov. vii. 15.

[3] The words of Lucian are, "At Delphi a virgin delivers the oracle, being a symbol of the constellation VIRGO; and *a dragon speaks from under the tripod*, because the constellation DRACO appears among the stars." (De Astrolog. p. 544, Edit. Paris, 1615.) This extract from Lucian connects the mythological with the actual serpent-worship at Delphi, identifying the serpent Python, with the polar dragon —the Δράκοντα ἀποστάτην of the Septuagint. For the

popular belief, founded originally upon the historical fact to which I have so often alluded—the speaking of the serpent in Paradise with a human voice; and the delusion was probably kept up by the ventriloquism of the Pythian priestess, as she sat upon the tripod, over the serpent.

That THE SERPENT was the original god of Delphi, may be further argued from the circumstance that *live serpents were kept in the adytum of the temple*[1]. A story is related by Diogenes Laertius, lib. v. c. 91, of a Pythian priestess, who was accidentally killed by treading upon one of these reptiles, which immediately stung her.

At DELOS, the next place in rank after Delphi for an oracle of Apollo, there was an image erected to him "*in the shape of a dragon*[2]." Here there was likewise an oracular fountain, called Inopus. "This word," remarks Bryant[3], "is compounded of Ain-opus; i. e. *Fons Pythonis:*" dedicated to the serpent-god Oph. Fountains sacred to this deity were not uncom-

reason assigned by Lucian, we see a *caduceus* in the hand of the personified constellation *Virgo*, in Hygin. Poet. Astron.

[1] Bulenger, ut supra.

[2] Potter, Archæol. Græc. ii. 283.

[1] Bryant, i. 257.

mon. Maundrel mentions a place in Palestine, called "the serpent's fountain;" and there was a celebrated stream at Colophon, in Ionia, which communicated prophetic inspiration to the priest of Apollo, who presided over it. Colophon, is col-oph-on; that is, "*collis serpentis solis*[1]."

In Pausanias (lib. ix. 557) we read of a fountain near the river Ismenus at Thebes, which was placed under the guardianship of a *dragon*. Near this place was the spot where Cadmus slew the dragon, from whose teeth arose the Ophiogenes, the builders of Thebes. It is probable, therefore, that instead of being sacred to *Mars*, as Pausanias affirms, this fountain was sacred to *the serpent-god*, called *Mars* in this place, because of the conflict between the Ophiogenes. A conclusion the more probable from the fact, that the Ismenian hill was dedicated to Apollo. The whole territory was (we may say) the patrimony of Oph—all the local legends confirm it[2].

There were many other oracles of Apollo besides those of Delphi and Delos, but of infe-

[1] Bryant, i. 256.

[2] See Pausanias *in loc.*

rior celebrity and various rites. It is remarkable, however, that the names of several of these places involve the title AUB or AB, the designation of the serpent-god. But not desiring to lay too much stress upon etymology, I pass them by, as I have many other places involving a similar evidence. I cannot, however, neglect a famous oracle which was in connexion with Delphi, and bears many internal marks of Ophiolatreia. This was the celebrated CAVE OF TROPHONIUS, in Phocis.

That this was a dracontic oracle will, I think, appear from the following considerations. In the grove of Trophonius, near Lebadea in Phocis, was a cave, in which were two figures, male and female, holding in their hands sceptres encircled by *serpents*. They were said to be the images of Æsculapius and Hygeia; but Pausanias[1] conjectures that they belonged rather to Trophonius the god of the place, and Hercyna, the female who discovered the cave; for he says, "*the serpent was not more sacred to Æsculapius than to Trophonius.*" Trophonius was an oracular god, and his attributes and name indicate the solar serpent OPH. TROPHON is,

[1] Page 602. Edit. Hanoviæ, 1613.

most probably, TOR-OPH-ON, *the temple of the solar serpent*[1]. The later Greeks, with their usual mythological confusion of places and persons, conjectured the name of the *temple* to be that of the *god;* and so converted "Tor-oph-on" into "Trophonius."

In corroboration of these remarks, we find that one of the builders of the temple of Apollo, at Delpi, was *Trophonius.*

Pausanias informs us, that whoever would inquire an oracle of Trophonius, must previously (in a small temple *near his cave*, dedicated to THE GOOD GENIUS) sacrifice to APOLLO, SATURN, JUPITER, JUNO, and CERES. Now it is remarkable that each of these deities had some connexion with the mythological serpent. APOLLO was pre-eminently the solar serpent-god; and is, therefore, *first* to be appeased. *Apollo* I take to be no other than OPEL, (Oph-el) PYTHO-SOL, whose name occurs so frequently in composition with the names of places as Torophel, Opheltin, &c. SATURN was married to OPS; under which disguise is concealed the deity OPH. JUPITER changed himself into a serpent twice, to deceive Rhea

[1] Bryant, ii. 162.

and Proserpine. The serpent Python was an emissary of JUNO, to persecute Latona, the mother of Apollo; and the car of CERES was drawn by serpents. Serpents also entered into the Eleusinian mysteries as symbolical of that goddess. Thus the history of each of these deities was, more or less, connected with the mythological serpent—*the very deity* whom the frequenters of this oracle would be called upon to propitiate before they entered the cave, on the supposition that TROPHONIUS was the OPHITE GOD.

But this is not all. In the cave of Trophonius LIVE SERPENTS were kept; and those who entered it were obliged to appease them by CAKES—which we know were offered to the sacred serpent at Athens, and were carried in the mysterious baskets at the Bacchanalian orgies. They were, in fact, *sacrifices* or *offerings* to these serpents, as objects of WORSHIP.—Another proof that the serpents were the real gods of the place, is found in the saying, that "no one ever came out of the cave of Trophonius *smiling*"—and why? διὰ τὴν τῶν ὄφεων ἔκπληξιν—*because of the* STUPOR *occasioned by the*

serpents[1]! The same expression is employed by Plutarch, in describing the effect produced by the Bacchanalian serpents upon the spectators of the mysteries—ἐξέπληττον τοὺς ἄνδρας[2]:—which must mean that they inspired the beholders with *religious awe;* for it can scarcely mean "*frightened,*" because he is speaking of the processions of Olympias, at *Pella,* where serpents were so familiar that they lived in the dwellings of the inhabitants, among their children[3], and therefore could, under no ordinary circumstances, become an object of terror. Hence it was, probably, a *religious dread* which seized the spectators, both at the orgies of Bacchus, and in the cave of Trophonius.

But we may approach even nearer to the deduction which I would draw; namely, that the serpents in the cave were *the real gods of the place,* by recollecting two fables which we have before considered: the *stupefaction* and ultimate death of the priest who intruded upon the privacy of the dragon of Metele; and the conver-

[1] Bulenger de Orac. apud Gronov. vii. 44.

[2] Alexander, 665.

[3] Lucian's Alexander the Impostor.

sion of the priestess of Minerva into stone, for her presumption in entering into the presence of that goddess uncalled. These fables would prove that an *affection of the senses* was believed to be the result always attending upon a *sight of the local deity*.

The serpents were therefore, probably, the original objects of divine worship in the cave of Trophonius.

The origin of the notion of an *oracular* God symbolized by a serpent, we have frequently referred to the ambiguously prophetic conversation of THE SERPENT with Eve in paradise. The consequent affection and depravation of her mind, and that of her husband, are not obscurely remembered in the ἔκπληξις of the votaries of Trophonius.

4. The worship of the serpent prevailed equally in the Peloponnesus. *Peloponnesus* is said to have been so called from being the "island of the Pelopidæ," descendants of PELOPS. The emigration of this mythological hero from Phrygia, forms an interesting epoch in Grecian story, and relates to the passage of the SACRED SERPENT from Canaan, the land of his first resting-

place after the flood. PELOPS is P'-EL-OPS, *the serpent-god* [1].

We have already seen that the Argives and Spartans were Ophites, and that from the celebrated temple of Æsculapius, at Epidaurus, the sacred serpent was conveyed to Sicyon. In addition to these facts, we learn from Pausanias that Antinoe, the foundress of Mantinea, was guided to that place by a serpent, from whom the river, which was near the town, was called Ophis [2].

The first prophet of Messene was said to have been Ophioneus; from which we may infer, that the first colony which introduced religious rites into Messenia was Ophite. A similar colony was established at Epidaurus Limera, in Laconia, under the auspices of a sacred serpent brought from Epidaurus, in Argolis [3].

Statius [4] describes a serpent, the object of religious reverence at Nemæa:—

[1] Allwood, *Lit. Antiq. of Greece*, p. 182, and Faber, *Cabiri*, ii. p. 212.

[2] Paus. 469. [3] Paus. 208.

[4] Thebaid, v. p. 289, Edit. Paris, 1618.

Interea campis nemoris *sacer horror* Achæi,
Terrigenæ erigitur *serpens*————

This is the serpent which slew the child Opheltes. Statius goes on to describe him :—

Inachio *sanctum* dixere tonanti
Agricolæ, *cui cura loci et sylvestribus aris*
Pauper honos.

The "*pauper honos*" was occasioned by the drought then raging, when the scene described by the poet took place. It was in search of food that the serpent sallied from the sacred grove when he saw and slew the sleeping child.

Bryant [1] assures us that Opheltes, or rather *Opheltin*, is the name of a place, and not of any person : and that this place was nothing more nor less than an inclosure sacred to the god OPHEL, the serpent-solar deity. Hence the legend respecting the serpent.

It will be shown in a subsequent chapter, that such inclosures were frequently formed *in the shape of a serpent*. If such was the form of "*Opheltin*," the fable explains itself. It means nothing more than that *human victims* were immolated at this shrine of OPHEL.

[1] ii. 185, also i. 117.

5. The islands of the Ægean sea were entirely overrun by Ophites. They colonized Delos, Tenos, Cos, and Seriphus, in such numbers as to mark their abode by traditions. The oracle of Delos we have ascertained to have been Dracontian. Tenos was called *Ophiusa*[1], as also Cythnus. A coin of Cos presents the figure of a serpent, with the word ΣΩΤΗΡ inscribed. The same figure and inscription appear on the coins of Epidaurus[2]: and we find that there was a temple of Æsculapius at Cos[3]. *Seriphus* is, according to Bryant, *Sar-Iph (petra Pythonis,)* "the serpent's rock." Here was a legend of Perseus bringing Medusa's head, and turning the inhabitants into stone[4]. The island was called *Saxum Seriphium* by the Romans; and by Virgil, "*serpentifera.*" Natural ruggedness is not peculiar to Seriphus; it seems to be characteristic of the greater number of the Grecian islands; and therefore, connecting the epithet "*serpentifera*" with the legend respecting Perseus, we may reasonably infer that a colony of Ophites were once settled in Seriphus, and had

[1] Bryant, Anal. ii. 215.
[2] Spanheim, 212.
[3] Strabo, 657.
[4] Ibid. 746.

a temple there of the *dracontic kind*, whose upright columns of stone may have given rise to the tradition that the inhabitants of the island were petrified by the *talismanic serpents*[1] of Perseus. Such a tradition was not unfrequently attached to these Ophite temples. Stonehenge was thus called "*Chorea Gigantum;*" and a Druids' circle in Cumberland, "*Long Meg and her Daughters,*" from a belief that the giants and the fairies were respectively metamorphosed into stone, in the mazes of a dance.

Of all the islands in the neighbourhood of the Peloponnesus, Crete was most celebrated for its primitive Ophiolatreia. Here the Egyptians first established those religious rites which were called by the Greeks the mysteries of Dionusus or Bacchus. The Cretan medals were usually impressed with the Bacchic basket, and the sacred serpent creeping in and out. Beger has written a treatise on these coins: the following is a description of three which he has engraved.

1. A Bacchic basket, with the sacred serpent. On the reverse, two serpents with their tails

[1] See article on the CADUCEUS in the preceding chapter.

intertwined, on each side of a *quiver*—for the Cretans were famous archers.

2. The Bacchic basket and serpent. On the reverse *a temple between two serpents.* In the middle of the temple, a lighted altar.

3. The Cretan Jupiter between two serpents.

The inhabitants of Crete are also said to have worshipped the Pythian Apollo. They had a *Pythium;* and the inhabitants were called *Pythians*[1].

6. We see, then, that serpent-worship very generally prevailed through Greece and its dependencies. Memorials of it have been preserved in many coins and medals, and pieces of ancient sculpture; and the only reason why we have not more records of this superstition is, that it was superseded by the fascination of the Polytheistic idolatry, which overwhelmed with a multitude of sculptured gods and goddesses the traditionary remains of the original religion.

There are, however, some few reliques of sculpture which bear interesting testimony to the worship of the serpent. Engravings of three

[1] Gesner, Hist. Anim. lib. v. p. 59.

are preserved by Fabretti [1], which are worthy of attention.

No. 1 represents a TREE encircled by a SERPENT; an altar appears in front, and a boy on horseback is seen approaching it. The inscription states this to be a monument dedicated by Glycon to his infant son Euhemerus.

No. 2, an equestrian approaching an altar at the foot of a TREE, about the branches of which a SERPENT is entwined. A priestess stands by the altar.

No. 3. In the centre is a TREE with a SERPENT enfolding it. To the right of the tree is a naked female, holding in her hand a chalice under the serpent's mouth, and near her a man in the attitude of supplication to the serpent. On the left is Charon leading Cerberus towards the tree.

These are perhaps funeral monuments, and the serpent emblematic of the MANES of the departed, as Montfaucon would lead us to believe. But the third sculpture (in spite of Charon) seems rather to allude to the annual custom at Epirus of soliciting the sacred serpent for a good harvest. The narrative is in

[1] Inscript. Antiq. p. 61, &c.

Ælian, Hist. Anim. lib. xi. 2, by which we learn that the husbandmen of the country proceeded annually to the temple where live serpents were kept, and *approached by naked priestesses*. If the serpent received the proffered food, the omen was a good one, and *vice versâ*.

7. Under the head of "Ophiolatreia in Greece," we may class Ophiomancy—*divination by serpents*. This superstition was sometimes resorted to by the Greeks, but was more common among the Romans: both of them borrowed it from earlier nations. For, the same word in Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek, which denotes "*divination*," denotes "*a serpent*." "Nachash"—"alahat[1]"—οἰωνίζεσθαι—have the same double significations. The Greek word, according to Hesychius, is derived from οἰωνὸς, *a snake*; "because they divined by means of a snake, which they called οἰωνός."

This is a coincidence which implies that *Ophiomancy* was the *first* species of divination: as it ought to have been, since Ophiolatreia was the first species of idolatry.

A remarkable instance of Grecian Ophiomancy occurs in the divination of Calchas at Aulis in

[1] Dickinson, *Delph. Phœnic.*

Bœotia, before the confederate chiefs sailed for the siege of Troy.

While the chieftains were assembled under a tree, having sacrificed a hecatomb to the gods for the success of their enterprise, on a sudden a great sign—μέγα σῆμα—appeared. A serpent gliding from the base of an altar ascended the tree, and devouring a sparrow and her eight young ones, came down again, and was converted into stone [1]. The omen was interpreted to mean a nine years' continuance of the war, and victory in the tenth.

In mentioning this anecdote we may remark, that the scene of the transaction was in Bœotia, one of the most celebrated *loci* of Ophiolatreia; and that Calchas, the soothsayer, acquired the gift of divination from Apollo, or in other words, was a priest of the Ophite god.

II. Epirus.—1. Following the Ophites from Greece into Epirus, we find that their traces, though few, are decisive. In this country, we are informed by Ælian [2], there was a circular grove of Apollo enclosed within a wall, where *sacred serpents* were kept. At the great annual

[1] Homer, Iliad, β. 308, &c. [2] Hist. Anim. lib. xi. 2.

festival, the virgin priestess approached them naked, holding in her hand the consecrated food. If they took it readily, it was deemed an augury of a fruitful harvest, and healthy year; if not, the contrary omen dismissed the anxious expectants in despondence. These serpents were said to be descended from the Python of Delphi,—a tradition which amounts to positive proof that the original religion of Delphi was Ophiolatreia.

2. From Epirus the superstition passed into Illyria. It was at Encheliæ that Cadmus and his wife were changed into serpents. A temple was erected to them in commemoration of this event; the probable form and dedication of which will be considered in the chapter on Ophite Temples.

Cadmus, who was the author of Ophiolatreia in Bœotia, Epirus, and Illyria, from having been the promoter, became the object of this idolatry. Like Thoth in Egypt, he was deified after death as the serpent-god, whose worship he had been so zealous to establish.

3. The superstition so generally received in Greece, passed rapidly into Macedonia, where the inhabitants of Pella became its chief votaries.

Of them it is said [1], that they kept domestic serpents, which were brought up among their children, and frequently nursed together with them, by the Macedonian mothers. The coins of Pella bore the impress of a serpent [2].

The idea of *divine incarnation* in a serpent must have appeared reasonable in that country to enable Olympias to invent the story of her son Alexander's dracontic origin. The queen was extravagantly fond of the Bacchanalian mysteries, at which she officiated in the character of a Bacchans. It is said by Plutarch [3], that she and her husband were initiated into them at Samothrace, when very young; and that she imitated the frantic gestures of the Edonian women in traversing the wilds of Mount Hæmus. When Olympias celebrated the orgies of Dionusus, attendants followed her, carrying Thyrsi encircled with serpents, having serpents also in their hair and chaplets.

4. The island of Samothrace was the Holy Isle of the ancients, and celebrated for the worship of the CABIRI, the most mysterious and awful of all the gods, whose name, even, it was

[1] Lucian. *Alexander Pseudomant.*

[2] Spanheim, 221.

[3] Alex. 665.

unlawful to pronounce lightly. The word "cabiri" is said to mean "the mighty ones." If it mean no more we may as vainly seek to penetrate into their hallowed abode for the illustration of our subject as the awe-struck Greeks themselves; but while probability opens a road to conjecture, we may be allowed to hazard one for its elucidation.

"CABIRI" is evidently a noun in the plural number, of which the singular is to be found in "CABIR."

Now CABIR is probably a compound word, whose component parts may be CA-AB-IR. If so, the interpretation is easy, CA-AB-IR resolving itself at once into CA or CHA, *domus*[1]; AB or AUB, *Pythonis*; IR or UR, *Lucis vel Solis*. "CABIR" will therefore mean "*the temple of the serpent of the sun*[2];" and "CABIRI" will bear the same signification, either as denoting more than one such temple, or a temple dedicated to two deities, AUB and the SUN.

[1] Bryant, Anal. i. 122.

[2] The first syllable may possibly be "*ca*" or "*ga*," *illustrious*. (*Faber on the Cabiri*, i. p. 28; who does not, however, apply any other meaning to the word "cabiri" than "the mighty ones.") In this case "cabiri" would be "*the illustrious* ABIRI."

Of the same kind I take to have been the CAABA of Mecca, which should be written CAABIR. Here we find the chief object of idolatry to have been a *conical stone*, which we know was an emblem of the solar god, being the image of a sun's ray. Another temple of this dedication was at Abury in Wiltshire, whose name, "Abury," is evidently "Abiri," or "Ab-ir," expressed in the plural number; the only difference[1] being, that in the name of this place the adjunct "ca" signifying "the temple," was dropped, and the names of the deity alone retained—ABIR, *quasi*, "SERPENS SOLIS." This temple we shall see hereafter was formed IN THE SHAPE OF A SERPENT. The substitution of *gods* for *temples* was of common occurrence in mythology, as we have seen in the case of Trophonius, where the TOR (or temple) of OPHON was changed into TROPHONIUS (the god.) It is not surprising, therefore, that "caabir," *the temple of Abir*, should be changed into "Cabir," the *god:* and by natural consequence, "Cabiri" would imply a plurality of gods of the same name.

[1] "*Abury*, so called from being dedicated to *the Abiri*, who were *the same as the Cabiri*." Faber on the Cabiri, i. 210.

The above conjecture, founded primarily upon etymology, is corroborated by FACTS.

Olympias, we have been informed by Plutarch, was initiated into the mysteries of *Dionusus* at Samothrace. Now *Dionusus*, the Orphic Bacchus, was symbolized by a *serpent*. This alone would be sufficient to support our conjecture on the etymology of "Cabiri." But we learn further, that the Orphic CURES, *the chief of the* CABIRI, assumed *a dracontic form*; and that the Orphic CRONUS and HERCULES are also described either as compounded of a man, a lion, and *a serpent*; or, simply, as *a winding snake*[1]. It was a common opinion among the Greeks that *Ceres*, *Proserpine*, and *Bacchus* were the Cabiri. To each of these deities, it is to be observed, the serpent was sacred, and formed a prominent feature in their mysteries.

I leave, therefore, to the candid consideration of the reader, the probability of the derivation which has been assigned to the word "*Cabiri*."

Between the religion of Samothrace and that of the Thracian continent, there was a strong similarity, or rather union. The great prophet of this common religion was Orpheus, who re-

[1] Faber, Pagan Idol. i. 453.

sided chiefly at Thrace, and was to that country what Thoth was to Egypt, and Cadmus to Greece,—the promoter of Ophiolatreia: but it was Ophiolatreia in conjunction with the solar idolatry. It seems that the original worship of the serpent had been already corrupted by the adoption of the mysteries of Dionusus. Thus Dionysopolis was "the city of Dionusus;" and consequently we find *a coiled serpent* impressed upon its coins. The same appeared on the medals of Pantalia, another city in Thrace; upon which Spanheim remarks, "Istud vero ex iis nummis colligas, in Macedoniâ, *Thraciâ*, Paphlagoniâ, Ponto, Bithyniâ, Ciliciâ, et vicinis regionibus, haud alios *locorum genios et custodes* gratiores, id genus draconibus extitisse[1]."

The priestesses of the superstition of Dionusus were no longer *Pythonesses* or *Oubs*, but *Bacchantes:* and many other innovations mark the decline of Ophiolatreia before Orpheus succeeded (but in succeeding lost his life) in uniting it to the sun-worship.

III. ITALY.—We come now to the traces of Ophiolatreia in Italy.

[1] Page 221.

In this country the principal colony of Ophites settled in Campania, and were called Opici or Ophici, from the object of their idolatry,—Ὀφικοὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ὄφεων, say Stephanus Byzantinus [1]. The same people were called *Pitanatæ*, as testified by Strabo [2]. *Pitanatæ*," remarks Bryant, "is a term of the same import as *Opici*, and relates to the votaries of *Pitan*, the serpent-deity, which was adored by the people. Menelaus was, of old, styled *Pitanates*, as we learn from Hesychius; and the reason of it may be known from his being a Spartan, by which was intimated one of the *Serpentigenæ*, or Ophites. Hence he was represented with *a serpent* on his shield [3]." This word *Pitan* is derived from the same root as *Python:* namely, the Hebrew פתן *serpens*, vel, *aspis*.

Many representations of warriors with the serpent on their shields, may be seen on the Etruscan vases, discovered on the estate of Canino in Etruria, which is supposed to have been the ancient Vitulonia [4].

Jerome Colonna attributes the name of Opici to the people of Campania, from a former king

[1] Cited by Bryant, ii. 214.
[2] 383.
[3] Bryant, Anal. ii. 216.
[4] Archæol. vol. xxiii.

bearing upon his standard the figure of a serpent[1]. But this would be the necessary consequence of his being an Ophite; for the military ensigns of most ancient nations were usually the images of the gods whom they worshipped. Thus a brigade of infantry among the Greeks was called πιτανάτης[2]; and the Romans, in the age of Marcus Aurelius, had a *dragon* standard at the head of each cohort, ten in every legion. The legion marched under *the eagle*[3]. These dragons were not woven upon any fabric of cloth, but were real *images* carried on poles[4]. Some say *(as Casaubon not. in Vopis. Hist. Aug.* 231.) that the Romans borrowed the dragon standard from the Parthians: but their vicinity to the Opici of Campania may perhaps suggest a more probable origin. The use of them by the Parthians may have induced the emperor Aurelius to extend them in his own army; but this extension was perhaps rather a revival than an introduction of the dragon ensign. They are

[1] Ennii Vita, xv.

[2] Hesychius.

[3] Salmasius, *Not.* in Jul. Capitol. Hist. August. Script. 95.

[4] See Description in Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xv.

mentioned by Claudian in his Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria, v. 193.

Stent bellatrices aquilæ, sævique *dracones*.

He mentions them again in his panegyric on Ruffinus and Honorius. Some of his lines are highly pictorial; such as :—

Surgere purpureis undantes *anguibus* hastas,
Serpentumque vago cœlum sævire volatu.
Ruff. lib. ii.

——————hi picta *draconum*
Colla levant, multusque tumet per nubila *serpens*,
Iratus, stimulante noto, vivitque receptis
Flatibus, et vario mentitur sibula tractu.
Ibid.

Prudentius and Sidonius Apollinaris also mention them.

The bearers of these standards were called *draconarii*; and it is not improbable that hence might have been derived our own expression of "dragoons," to designate a certain description of cavalry, though the original meaning of the word is altogether lost. This word we have borrowed from the French, who received it probably from the Romans.

From Campania the Ophites passed into La-

tium, and established the chief seat of their religion at Lanuvium. The medals of this city bore the figure of a dragon or a large serpent; which, according to Spanheim, would denote that this animal represented the tutelary god of the place: an opinion which is proved correct by the following extracts from Ælian[1] and Propertius. From the former we learn, that "at Lanuvium is a large and dark grove, and near it a temple of the Argive Juno. In the same place is a large deep cave, the den of a *great serpent*. To this grove the virgins of Latium are taken annually to ascertain their chastity, which is indicated by the dragon." Propertius, describing this annual custom speaks thus:—

Disce quid Esquilias hac nocte fugavit aquosas,
Cum vicina novis turba cucurrit agris.
Lanuvium annosi vetus est tutela draconis;
Hic ubi tam raræ non perit hora moræ,
Qua sacer abripitur cæco descensus hiatu,
Qua penetral, (virgo, tale iter omne cave!)
Jejuni serpentis honos, cum pabula poscit
Annua, et ex ima sibila torquet humo.
Talia demissæ pallent ad sacra puellæ:
Cum tenera anguino traditur ore manus.

[1] Var. Hist. lib. ix. 16.

Ille sibi admotas a virgine corripit escas;
Virginis in palmis ipsa canistra tremunt.
Si fuerint castæ, redeunt in colla parentum,
Clamantque agricolæ "fertilis annus erit[1] !"

There is great similarity between the above scene, and that mentioned in a former part of this chapter, as taking place annually in Epirus; and there can be no doubt that they belonged to the same superstition.

The Ophites who settled in Campania and Lanuvium, left a colony also in Crotona, and at Lilybæum in Sicily: for both these places were remarkable for the dracontic medal, which generally denoted the consecration of a city to the serpent-god[2].

The Marsi who settled at the lake Fucinus are said by Virgil, Æn. vii. 750. to have been "charmers of serpents," which is tantamount to calling them Ophites.

Montfaucon[3] has an engraving from a silver medal of Lepidus, on which is a tripod:—"A serpent of vast length raises itself over the vase, twisting his body into a great many folds and

[1] Eleg. viii. lib. 4. [2] Spanheim 212.
[3] Suppl. vol. i. 162.

knots . . . . . The serpent's head *darts rays;* which seems to show that this part of the Egyptian Theology (relating to the solar serpent) had spread itself among the Romans; and that they represented the sun by a serpent."

Ophiomancy prevailed among the Romans, when Ophiolatreia had decreased through the influence of time and civilization. The accidental sight of a serpent was sometimes esteemed a good [1], and sometimes a bad omen. The death of Tiberius Gracchus was denoted by a serpent found in his house [2]. Sylla was more fortunate in his divination from a serpent which glided from beneath an altar, while he was sacrificing at Nola: as also was Roscius, whose future successful career was foretold, from his being found, when an infant, sleeping in his cradle, enfolded by a snake. In each of these cases Haruspices were sent for, who interpreted the omen.

A serpent was accounted among the *pedestria auspicia*, and is alluded to by Horace, lib. iii.

[1] Val. Max. lib. i. c. 6.

[2] Cicero de Divin. lib. i.

ode 27; who seems to consider it a sinister omen :—

> Rumpat et serpens iter institutum,
> Si per obliquum, similis sagittæ,
> Terruit Mannos.

Terence[1] also considers it in the same light—

> Monstra evenerunt mihi :
> Introit in ædes ater alienus canis,
> Anguis per impluvium decidit de tegulis.

The Sardinians also, as we are informed by De Lacepede, domesticated the serpent, as an animal of auspicious omen. This notion may have reached them either from Italy or Africa.

IV. Northern Europe.—The Romans being, comparatively, a modern people, had not among them those strong traces of Ophiolatreia which we have observed in Phœnicia, Egypt, and Greece. But if we now follow the northward march of the sacred serpent from the plains of Shinar, we shall find that he entered deeply into the mythology of the tribes who penetrated into Europe through the Oural mountains. Of these, the Sarmatian horde, as being nearest to the seat of their original habitation, first claims attention.

[1] Phormio, Act. iv. scen. 4, 24.

An unlettered race of wandering barbarians cannot be expected to have preserved many records of their ancient religion; but to the enterprising missionaries of the Christian faith we are indebted for sufficient notices to assure us that THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT was their primitive idolatry. To this conclusion we are, indeed, led by the few fragments of tradition in the classical writers who have noticed the religion of the remote Hyperboreans. These people were devoted to the solar superstition [1], of which the most ancient and most general symbol was the serpent. We may therefore expect to find traces of the pure serpent-worship, also, in their religion. They had a priestess called *Opis*, who came with another priestess *(Argis)* to Delos, bringing offerings to Lucina, in gratitude for the safe delivery of some distinguished females of their own country [2]. These, according to Faber [3], were priestesses of OPH and ARG (the deified personification of the ARK.) Bryant [4] also cites a line from Callimachus,

[1] See Bryant on the Amazonians and Hyperboreans, *Anal.* vol. v. These were the same people.

[2] Herod. lib. iv. c. 35. [3] Cabiri, i. 208.

[4] Anal. ii. 206.

which gives the name of three priestesses of the Hyperboreans, two of whom are *Oupis* and *Evaion*. The latter word he decomposes into *eva-on*, *serpens sol*. So that they were representatives of the two superstitions—the simple and primitive serpent-worship, and the worship of the solar serpent. Other obscure, though not altogether uncertain, notices are to be found in Diodorus Siculus, Hecateus, &c. which lead to the conclusion that the Ophite religion was once prevalent in the north of Europe [2]. These inferences are corroborated by indisputable facts of modern discovery, which I now proceed to detail.

1. SARMATIA. From Ouzel [1] we learn that the serpent was one of the earliest objects of worship in Sarmatia. He cites Erasmus Stella *de Antiq. Borussiæ*. "For some time," says this author, "they had no sacred rites; at length they arrived at such a pitch of wickedness, that they worshipped *serpents and trees*." The connexion between *serpents* and *trees* we have had occasion to notice more than once. They

[1] Not. in Minuc. Fel. p. 267.

[1] The story of Abaris, the Hyperboreans, who made the Palladium of Troy from the bones of *Pelops*, is that of an *Ophite* priest. *Abaris* is probably a compound of AB, and AUR.

are united on the sepulchral monuments of the Greeks and Romans, on the coins of Tyre, and among the Fetiches of Whidah. We shall find them, in the same union, pervading the religion of the Hyperboreans of every description, the superstition of the Scandinavians, and the worship of the Druids. They are closely connected in the mythology of the Heathens of almost every nation: and the question is not unnatural —"whence arose this union?" The coincidences are too remarkable to be unmeaning; and I have no hesitation in affirming my belief that THE PARADISIACAL SERPENT, and THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, are the prototypes of the idolatry.

The Samogitæ (Muscovites) partook of the same superstition [1]. They worshipped the serpent as A GOD; and if any adversity befell them, concluded that their *domestic serpents* (which, like the people of Pella, they kept in their houses,) had been negligently served.

From Muscovy we may follow the same superstition into Lithuania, the modern Poland. These people, we are informed by Guaguin [2],

[1] Ouzel, *ut supra*, citing Sigismund Liber. *Comment. in Muscov.*

[2] Ouzel, *ut supra*.

" believed *vipers and serpents to be gods*, and worshipped them with great veneration. Every householder, whether citizen, husbandman, or noble, kept a serpent in his house, as a household god: and it was deemed so deadly an offence to injure or dishonour these serpents, that they either deprived of property or of life every one who was guilty of such a crime."

In Koch (*De cultu Serpentum*, p. 39: a valuable, though short and superficial treatise,) we read the following passage:—" That these wretched idolaters offered sacrifices to serpents, Jerome of Prague (*teste Sylvio de Europâ*, c. 26.) saw with his own eyes . . . . . Every householder had a snake in a corner of his house, to which he gave food and offered sacrifice, as he lay upon the hay. Jerome commanded all these to be killed, and publicly burnt. Among such as were brought out for this purpose, one was found larger than the rest, which, though often thrown into the fire, could not be consumed."

The serpent-worship of the Lithuanians is also noticed by Cromer[1], who charges the Prussians likewise with the same idolatry. Guaguin relates an anecdote of a serpent wor-

[1] De reb. Polon. lib. iii. p. 43.

shipper of Lithuania, who was persuaded to destroy his domestic god; and subsequently losing all his bees, (by whose labour he subsisted,) attributed the calamity to his apostacy, and relapsed into his former superstition. The scene of this anecdote was a village near Troki, six miles from Vilna; upon which Masius [1] remarks, "Est quatuor a Vilna miliaribus, Lavariski, villa regia; *in quâ a multis* ADHUC *serpentes coluntur.*"

The Lithuanians were the last of the Europeans who were converted to Christianity; an event which did not take place until the fourteenth century. Jagello, the last heathen duke, was baptized anno 1386 [2].

The inhabitants of Livonia were also addicted to this gross idolatry, and carried it to a barbarous length. It is said that they were accustomed to sacrifice the most beautiful of their captives to their dragon-gods [3]. The same custom we have observed to exist at Whidah.

2. SCANDINAVIA. The second great northern

[1] De Diis German. c. 29.

[2] Mosheim, Ecc. Hist. ii. 449.

[3] Koch, c. 39, citing Trog. Arnkiel. *Cymbrische Heiden. Rel.* p. 123.

family of Europe, was the Scandinavian, inhabiting the country now occupied by the Laplanders, Fins, Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes. To these were allied the Vandals and Lombards, not only by ties of consanguinity but religion. These were well addicted to the worship of the serpent; and some of them retained in their traditionary mythology, traces, not obscure, of the fall of man.

We are informed by Olaus Magnus[1], that domestic serpents were considered as *penates* in the extreme parts of the north of Europe; and that they were fed on cows' milk, or that of sheep, together with the children. They played freely in the houses, and it was an offence of the first magnitude to hurt them.

Among the Ophites of the north, the most conspicuous were the Danes, who exhibited the sacred dragon upon their royal standard. Pontanus[2] alluding to it, expresses himself thus:—

> Hinc rigidos Sclavos effert pernicibus alis,
> Et loca propugnat sanguinolenta DRACO.

---

[1] Hist. Gent. Septentrion. lib. xxi. c. 48.

[2] Cited by Koch, 39.

The dragon standard of the Danes was carried by their piratical brethren, the Normans, into France; and was for many years the ensign of the Dukes of Normandy. Du Fresne cites a charter granted to one of the family of Bertran, to bear "the dragon standard."

But this custom, so commonly observed by the Ophites, would not have pre-eminently distinguished the Danes as worshippers of the sacred serpent, had there not been discovered a sacrificial vessel of their primitive idolatry, which is at once a confirmation of their superstition, and a key to its mysteries. It is, indeed, a most valuable interpreter of the Celtic faith, as it respected the tradition of the fall of man, and an eloquent index to the religion of the Druids.

This relic of idolatry is the celebrated horn found by a female peasant, near Tundera [1], in Denmark, in the year, 1639. It is of gold, and embossed in parallel circles, of rude workmanship. These circular compartments are seven in number, and in five out of the seven circles, the figure of a serpent is seen in various attitudes.

[1] Perhaps *Tonder* in the Duchy of Sleswick.

Circle 1 represents a naked boy or woman kneeling. The extended arms are held up to heaven. On each side of this figure is a large serpent in the attitude of attack.

In the second compartment of this circle, the same naked figure appears flying from a serpent which pursues. The third compartment represents the serpent with his face averted from the figure, who holds up both hands, as if in gratitude for deliverance.

Circle 2 exhibits a naked boy or woman (for the figure has no beard) seated upon the ground, with the hands brought together, *as if in the action of prayer to a serpent*. Another serpent is coiled behind the figure, with his head and the upper part of his body erect. The next compartment of this circle contains the same human figure *in conversation* with the serpent.

The serpent appears in three others of the seven circles, but not in so historical a form. In these it is probably a representation of the constellation Draco, for some of the remaining figures seem to belong to the zodiac.

It may be rash to conjecture that the first two circles allude to the history of man in paradise, *persecuted by the serpent*, and *saved*

from his *extreme* violence : but, nevertheless, the compartment which describes the human figure *in conversation* with its dracontic enemy, seems to point to this event.

Koch considers the hieroglyphics as explanatory of the ancient practice of the country, which devoted human victims to serpent-gods. " Nos exinde conjecimus, a tenerâ ætate infantes serpentibus vovisse, superstitiosos veteres [1]." Olaus Wormius is of opinion that *the serpent* referred to the serpent-tempter and destroyer.

But whichever be correct, (and for our theory it matters not *which*,) it is evident that the figures have a sacred signification, either as connected with the religious rites, superstitions, or fables of the original possessors.

Now we know, from unquestionable authority, that not only did Ophiolatreia prevail throughout the whole of this and the neighbouring countries, but also that the tradition of the serpent in paradise was preserved in the mythology of Scandinavia, with an accuracy equal to that of the Greeks and Phœnicians. Hence it matters not, whether THE HORN be descriptive of the fall of man, of the Ophite rites of the

[1] Page 50.

Scandinavians, or simply of the zodiac, as delineated by the northern astronomers. For the astronomical mythology which relates to the serpent or dragon, was entirely borrowed from the events in Paradise, to which also may be referred the whole of the Ophite worship.

The Vandals worshipped their principal deity under the form of a *flying dragon*; and, like the rest of their northern brethren, kept domestic serpents. It is said that their women also kept snakes in hollow oaks, to whom they made offerings of milk [1], and whom they adored with the most abject humility. They prayed to them for blessings, for the health of their husbands, and family, &c. [2]—in a word, adored them as gods.

The Lombards also cherished the same super-

[1] Milk was frequently offered in libations to the heathen gods *. Apollo had for one of his titles *Galaxius*, "the milky." A festival called Galaxia was held to him, in which the votaries partook of a feast of barley pulse, boiled in milk. Quære—might not the Romish practice of eating frumenty in Lent have arisen from this custom?

[2] Koch, citing Olaus Magnus, lib. ii. c. 24; and Hartnochius *de reb. Pruss.*

* Potter. Arch. Græc. i. 213; and ii. 236.

stition, for they carried it with their victorious arms into Italy. When Barbatus lived at Benevento, A.D. 688, he discovered that some of the inhabitants, who were Lombards, *worshipped a golden viper* and a *tree*, on which the skin of a wild beast was hung." He suppressed this idolatry, and being made Bishop of Benevento, cut down the tree, and melted the golden viper for a sacramental chalice [1].

V. Western Europe.

1. Britain. Our British ancestors, under the tuition of the venerable Druids, were not only worshippers of the solar deity, symbolized by the serpent, but held the serpent, independent of his relation to the sun, in peculiar veneration. Cut off from all intimate intercourse with the civilized world, partly by their remoteness [2], and partly by their national character [3], the Britons retained their primitive idolatry long after it had yielded in the neighbouring countries to the polytheistic corruptions of Greece and Egypt. In process of time, however, the

[1] Milner, Hist. of the Church, iii. 113.

[2] "Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos."—*Virg.*

[3] "Britannos hospitibus feros."—*Hor.*

gods of the Gaulish Druids penetrated into the sacred mythology of the British, and furnished personifications for the different attributes of the dracontic god Hu. This deity was called "THE DRAGON RULER OF THE WORLD [1]," and his car was drawn by SERPENTS [2]. His priests, in accommodation with the general custom of the ministers of the Ophite god, were called after him, ADDERS [3].

In a poem of Taliessin, translated by Davies, in his Appendix, No. 6, is the following enumeration of a Druid's titles :—

> "I am a Druid; I am an architect; I am a prophet;
> I am a SERPENT"—*(Gnadr.)*

From the word *Gnadr* is derived "adder," the name of a species of snake. *Gnadr* was probably pronounced like "*adder*" with a nasal aspirate.

The mythology of the Druids contained also a goddess CERIDWEN, whose car was drawn by serpents. It is conjectured that this was Grecian CERES ; and not without reason, for the increasing intercourse between the British and

[1] Davies' Mythol. of the Druids, p. 116.

[2] Ibid. p. 122.

[3] Ibid. p.210.

Gaulish Druids introduced into the purer religion of the former many of the corruptions ingrafted upon that of the latter by the Greeks and Romans. The Druids of Gaul had among them many divinities corresponding with those of Greece and Rome. They worshipped OGMIUS, (a compound deity between Hercules and Mercury,) and, after him, *Apollo*, *Mars*, *Jupiter*, and *Minerva*, or deities resembling them [1]. Of these they made images; whereas hitherto the only image in the British worship was the great wicker idol, into which they thrust HUMAN VICTIMS designed to be burnt as AN EXPIATORY SACRIFICE for the sins of some chieftain. The wicker idol, though formed in the shape of a man, was perhaps rather a sacrificial ornament than a god; emblematic of the nature of the victims within it. The whole sacrifice was but an ignorant expression of the primeval and universal faith in the ATONEMENT.

The following translation of a Bardic poem, descriptive of one of their religious rites, identifies the superstition of the British Druids with the aboriginal Ophiolatreia, as expressed in the mysteries of Isis in Egypt. The poem is entitled,

[1] Cæsar. Comment. de bello Gallico, lib. v. c. 17.

"The Elegy of Uther Pendragon;" that is, of Uther, "*The Dragon's Head;*" and it is not a little remarkable that the word "*Draig*" in the British language, signifies, at the same time, "*a fiery serpent, a dragon,* and THE SUPREME GOD [1]."

In the second part of this poem is the following description of the sacrificial rites of Uther Pendragon.

"With solemn festivity round the two lakes;
With the lake next my side;
With my side moving round the sanctuary;
While the sanctuary is earnestly invoking
THE GLIDING KING, before whom the FAIR ONE
Retreats, upon the veil that covers the huge stones;
Whilst THE DRAGON *moves round over*
The places which contain vessels
Of drink offering:
Whilst the drink offering is in THE GOLDEN HORNS;
Whilst the golden horns are in the hand;
Whilst the knife is upon the chief victim;
Sincerely I implore thee, O victorious BELI, &c. &c.

This is a most minute and interesting account of the religious rites of the Druids, proving in clear terms their addiction to Ophiolatreia:

[1] Owen's Dict. Art. *Draig.*

for we have not only the history of "THE GLIDING KING," *who pursues* "THE FAIR ONE," depicted upon "the veil which covers the huge stones"—a history which reminds us most forcibly of the events in Paradise, under a poetic garb; but we have, likewise, beneath that veil, within the sacred circle of "the huge stones," THE GREAT DRAGON, A LIVING SERPENT, "moving round the places which contain the vessels of drink-offering;" or, in other words, moving round the altar stone, in the same manner as the serpent in the Isiac mysteries passed about the sacred vessels containing the offerings:

"Pigraque labatur circa donaria serpens[1]."

The GOLDEN HORNS, which contained the drink offerings, were very probably of the same kind as that found in Tundera, in Denmark, and described in a preceding page of this chapter: *a probability which confirms the Ophiolatreia* of the DANES, argued in the same section from historical documents. And conversely, the existence of the Danish horn proves that in the mysteries of Druidical worship, the serpent was a prominent character.

[1] Ovid. Amor. lib. ii. Eleg. 13.

If we refer to the description of the horn of Tundera [1], we shall find upon it precisely the same impressed history which was pictured "upon the veil that covered the huge stones." The dragon, "the gliding king," is seen in the same attitude of pursuing a naked figure, which might be mistaken, from the rude workmanship of the horn, for a *boy;* but which is proved by the Bardic poem, above cited, to be a female; "the fair one," as she is, by a figure of poetry, designated.

The god to whom these offerings were made and whose sacrifices were here celebrated, was BELI; perhaps the BEL of the Babylonians, and the OBEL of primitive worship; the archi-

[1] This horn, now a drinking cup, is said to have been originally a musical instrument: but it will still illustrate my theory, for *horns* are supposed to have been used by the Scalds or Runic priests to call together the congregation to sacrifice. Such horns would probably bear upon them devices appertaining to their religion. Horns were sometimes used for both purposes, being furnished with a cap, and so convertible into drinking cups *. The "golden horns which contained the drink offerings" above described, might thus have been used also as sacrificial trumpets.

* Pegge on Charter Horns. Archæol. v. 3.

type of APOLLO in the name and rites. To BEL, the Babylonians consecrated, as we have seen, *a living serpent;* and *living serpents* were also preserved in the Fane of Delphi, and in many other places where the deity OPH or OB was worshipped. The fabulous hero himself, in whose honour these sacrifices are celebrated, was distinguished by the title of "The Wonderful Dragon." Every circumstance, therefore, combines to strengthen the conclusion, that the Druids thus engaged were OPHITES of the original stock.

The learned Celtic scholar, from whose translation the above poem is taken, explains it in these words:—"These ceremonies are performed at a public and solemn festival, whilst the sanctuary, or assembly of priests and votaries, invoke the dragon king. The place of consecration is on the sacred mound, within the stone circle and mount which represent the world, and near the consecrated lakes[1]. At this time

[1] The scene of these rites might have been STONEHENGE, which is said by tradition to have been erected in honour of Uther Pendragon. The only difficulty in this conjecture is the mention of "lakes" near the temple. But an attentive survey of the spot has convinced me that a piece of water

the huge stones of the temple were covered with a veil, on which was delineated the history of the dragon king. There seems also to have been *a living serpent as a symbol of the god*, who is gliding from place to place, and tasting the drink-offerings in the sacred vessels[1]."

The sanctity of the serpent showed itself in another very curious part of the superstition of the British Druids, namely, in that which related to the formation and virtues of the celebrated *anguinum*, as it is called by Pliny, or *gleinen nadroeth*, that is, *snake-stones*, as they were called by the Britons. Sir Richard Colt Hoare

once existed under the hill upon which Stonehenge stands. On the side towards Amesbury there are evident traces of the bed of a river running north and south. Perhaps, by means of this winding water, the stupendous stones which form the temple were conveyed on rafts to the spot of their erection. That such means of conveyance were used by the Druids, appears from the fact that a large stone, in every respect like those at Stonehenge, now lies in the river Avon at Bulford, not far from hence. It would be an interesting research to trace the course of this apparent river-bed, and might throw much light on the disputed question—"whence, and how came these stones to Stonehenge?" I believe that they came from the valley of the Grey Wethers, near Abury.

[1] Davies' Myth. of the Brit. Druids, Appendix, No. 11.

gives an engraving of one in his "Modern Wiltshire, Hundred of Amesbury," p. 56. "This is a head of imperfect vitrification, representing two circular lines of opaque skyblue and white, which seem to represent a snake twined round a centre which is perforated." Many beads of this kind have been found in various parts of the island of Great Britain. Mr. Lhwyd, the celebrated Welsh antiquary, thus describes them in a letter to Ralph Thoresby:—"I am fully satisfied that they were amulets of the Druids. . . . . I have seen one of them that had nine small snakes upon it. . . . . There are others that have one or two or more snakes [1]."

These, we are informed by the Roman naturalist, were worn about the neck as charms, and were deemed efficacious in rendering their possessors fortunate in every difficult emergency. He records an anecdote of a Roman knight, who was put to death by Claudius for entering a court of justice with an anguinum on his neck, in the belief that its virtue would overrule the judgment in his favour.

The word *anguinum* is obviously derived from

[1] Thoresby's Correspondence, i. 413.

anguis, a snake; and the formation of it is thus described by Pliny:—"An infinite number of snakes, entwined together in the heat of summer, roll themselves into a mass, and from the saliva of their jaws, and the froth of their bodies, is engendered an EGG, which is called '*anguinum.*' By the violent hissing of the serpents the egg is forced into the air, and the Druid, destined to secure it, must catch it in his sacred vest before it reaches the ground."

This singular superstition was still extant in Wales and Cornwall in the time of Camden, as we find from the following passage in his Britannia, page 815. "In most parts of Wales, throughout all Scotland, and in Cornwall, we find it a common opinion of the vulgar, that about Midsummer-eve it is usual for snakes to meet in company, and that by their joining heads together and hissing, a kind of bubble is formed, which the rest by continual hissing blow on till it passes quite through the body, and then it immediately hardens, and resembles a glass ring, which whoever finds will prosper in all undertakings. The rings thus generated are called *gleinen nadroeth;* in English, *snake-stones.*" They are small glass amulets, com-

monly half as wide as finger rings, but much thicker, and of a green colour usually, though sometimes blue, and waved with red and white."

The anguinum continued to be venerated in Cornwall in the time of Dr. Borlase, but the tradition of its formation was somewhat different from the above. "The country people have a persuasion, that the snakes here breathing upon a hazel wand, produce a stone ring of a blue colour, in which there appears the yellow figure of a snake; and that beasts bit and envenomed, being given some of the water to drink wherein this stone has been infused, will perfectly recover of the poison [1]."

These charms were usually called "*glains*;" and, according to Davies [2], "were some blue, some white, a third sort green, and a fourth variegated with all these colours, but still preserving the appearance of glass. Others again were made of earth, and only glazed over."

The "egg" of which Pliny speaks was only an envelope, the interior and real glain being either a circle or a lunette: the latter referring

[1] Borlase, Antiq. of Cornwall, 137.

[2] Davies' Myth. of Druids, 211.

probably to the lunar deity, or according to Davies, to the arkite worship, the ark being sometimes described under the form of a lunette. These stones have been frequently found in Wales, Northamptonshire[1], and in many other parts of England. Dr. Stukeley, in his description of the Druidical temple of Abury in Wiltshire, mentions having bought two British beads of the inhabitants, "one large, of a light blue, and ribbed; and the other less, of a dark blue;" which had been dug up out of one of the barrows on Hakpen Hill, a promontory upon which rested the head of the serpent which formed the avenues to the temple of Abury. Beads of this kind have been found in the barrows near Stonehenge, and are probably most of them the "gleinen nadroeth," deposited in the sepulchres of the dead as talismanic securities; the same perhaps which had been worn by the deceased in their lifetime.

Analogous to this is the superstition of the Malabarians, who venerate the Pedra del Cobra, or serpent-stone, which the Brahmins persuade them is taken from the head of the hooded ser-

[1] Morton, Nat. Hist. of North. c. x.

pent. and, when consecrated by the priests, an effective charm against the bite of venomous snakes.

This is the serpent-stone to which Pliny alludes, as being held in high estimation by the eastern kings. "It must be cut out of the brain of a living serpent, where it grows; for if the serpent die, the stone dissolves. The natives, therefore, first charm the serpent to sleep with herbs; and when he is lulled, make a sudden incision in his head, and cut out the stone [1]."

The superstition of the anguinum prevailed also in Scandinavia, as we learn from Olaus Magnus: "Creduntur *(sc. serpentes)* veterum relatione, lapidem flatu suo gignere [2]."

Between the religion of the Druids and that of the Scandinavians there was a strong similarity, though not in every respect an identity. The same sacrificial rites to the dracontic god, and the same circular temples, may be observed in Britain and the Scandinavian countries [3]; and a branch of the same idolatry flourished

[1] Gesner. Hist. Anim. lib. iii. p. 85.

[2] Hist. Gent. Septent. lib. xxi. c. 48.

[3] See Olaus Wormius, *de Mon. Danor.*

in Ireland—so extensively was Ophiolatreia spread over Europe.

Mr. Faber is of opinion that "the many stories in England of the destruction of huge serpents, relate ultimately to the destruction of the living serpents worshipped by the Druids." He instances the cave of the dragon of Wharncliff in Yorkshire, as precisely similar by legendary description to the cave of Cadmus's dragon; and remarks that "the manor of Sockburne is still held by the tenure of exhibiting to the Bishop of Durham a sword with which a monstrous serpent is said to have been slain." The presentation of the sword to the *Bishop*, would seem to imply that a *religious* service had been rendered by its former owner. This might have been the destruction of an Ophite temple. For in most countries the overthrow of the serpent-worshippers is allegorized into a victory over some monstrous dragon, who infested the neighbourhood. That the votaries of Ophiolatreia penetrated into every part of Britain, is probable from the vestiges of some such idolatry even now to be found in Scotland and the western isles. Several obelisks remain in the vicinity of Aberdeen, Dundee, and Perth, upon which

are devices strongly indicative of Ophiolatreia. They are engraved in Gordon's Itinerarium Septentrionale. The serpent is a frequent and conspicuous hieroglyphic. From the Runic characters traced upon some of these stones, it is conjectured that they were erected by the Danes. Such might have been the case; but the Danes themselves were a sect of Ophites, and had not the people of the country been Ophites also, they might not have suffered these monuments to remain. Dr. Ingram pronounces some of these stones to be Phœnician, especially one on which the figure of a serpent is seen with the sun and moon revolving about his head. He considers this figure to be a record of "the old serpent."

An obelisk near Dundee, is very remarkable. It is plain on every side but one, on which is carved the representation of a man on horseback pursuing a dragon. The tradition is that the hero lived on the skirts of a forest where the dragon concealed himself, and preyed upon the human race. Among other victims, he devoured the nine daughters of this chieftain, who thereupon mounted his horse, and plunging into the forest, attacked the monster. The dragon fled before

him, but was overtaken and slain upon the spot where the obelisk above mentioned now stands to record the deed. The track through which the dragon and his pursuer passed is called "*the den of Bal Dragon*[1]."

It is possible that this story may also allude to the destruction of an Ophite temple.

British Ophiolatreia sunk beneath the unsparing sword of the Romans. But a symbol of the idolatry survived its overthrow; and under the form of "the Dragon standard," not only sustained the nationality of the Welsh, but also became the idol of the Anglo-Saxons.

The origin of this standard is curiously though apocryphally explained by Matthew of Westminster. "The brother of the British king Aurelius beheld a vision—a fiery meteor in the form of a great dragon, illumined the heavens with a portentous glare. The astrologers unanimously expounded the omen to signify that the seer would one day sit upon the throne of Britain. Aurelius died, and his brother became king. His first royal act was to cause the fabrication of two dragons in gold, like the figure which the meteor assumed. One of these he placed

[1] Pinkerton, Lit. Corresp. ii. 426.

in Winchester Cathedral; the other he reserved to be carried before him in his military expeditions. And hence the custom which the kings of England have ever since observed—that of having the *Dragon standard* borne before them in battle." The dragon standard was borne before Richard in Palestine, and two noble knights disputed the honour of carrying it. "When the king had planted his standard in the middle," says Hoveden, "he gave his *dragon* to be borne by Peter de Pratellis, contrary to the claim of Robert de Trussebut, who demanded that honour as his hereditary right."

In the hands of the standard-bearer of Henry the Third, the dragon was avowedly the harbinger of destruction. In the Welsh campaign, "so great was the indignation of Henry," says Knighton, "that *having raised the dragon standard*, he ordered his troops to advance and give no quarter." The same, says Matthew of Paris—"animating his troops he marched daily clad in armour, and unfolding his royal ensign, *the dragon which knows not how to spare*, he threatened extermination to the Welsh." With similar ferocity and with the same terrific standard, he

marched against his rebellious barons. The dragon was always the herald of "*no quarter.*"

In camp this standard was planted in the front of the king's pavilion, to the right of the other ensigns, and was kept unfurled day and night [1].

The dragon was introduced by Henry the Seventh, as a supporter of the royal arms. He brought it from Wales, and it is still the king's crest as sovereign of that principality. It gave place, at the Union, to the Unicorn of Scotland; but the heraldic dragon is as different an animal from the poetic, as the poetic is from the religious, which last was merely *a large serpent.*

2. IRELAND.—The prevalence of the Celtic superstition in Ireland is marked, even now, by stupendous monuments: but the Druids of this nation assimilated themselves rather to those of Gaul than of Britain. The chief object of their adoration was OGHAM or OGMIUS, the same as the deity OG of Trachonitis. His images were represented as holding in their hands the club of Hercules, surmounted by the caduceus of Mercury, the wings of which were attached to

[1] Du Fresne.

the club. The staff of the caduceus terminated in a ring.

At New Grange, in the county of Meath, has been discovered a grand cruciform cavern, whose consecration to Mithras is indisputable. This Persian deity was symbolized by a serpent, and is the corresponding god to Apollo in Grecian mythology. Here were dug up three remarkable stones, on which mystical figures, like spiral lines, or *coiled serpents*, rudely carved, have been observed. "These lines," says Mr. Beauford, who describes the cavern, "appear to be the representation of serpents coiled up, and were probably symbols of the Divine Being[1]." The relation of these relics to the celebrated Omphalos we have considered in a former part of this volume, to which, therefore, the reader is referred.

For the paucity of the remains of the ancient Ophiolatreia in Ireland, we are perhaps indebted to the renowned St. Patrick, whose popular legend may not, after all, be so ridiculous or so groundless as Englishmen and Protestants are accustomed to imagine. It is said, and believed by the lower order of Irish

[1] Vallancey, Collect. de reb. Hibern. vol. ii. 174.

to this day, that St. Patrick *banished all snakes* from Ireland by his prayers. May not this imply that St. Patrick, in evangelizing that country, overthrew the superstition of THE SERPENT-WORSHIPPERS? Such an inference is drawn by Bryant, from similar stories of the destruction of serpents in the Grecian Archipelago and Peloponnesus; and I see no reason why a similar line of argument should not be adopted in regard to the achievements of St. Patrick in Ireland. Such fables are general in Christian countries which were ever devoted to Ophiolatreia[1].

3. GAUL.—The ancient religion of Gaul, though established by Druids, was not so pure as that of Britain; neither did it retain so strong a hold upon the affections of the people. There was in it more of idolatry, and less of priest-craft; so that when the Romans subjugated the country, the natives passed rapidly into the superstitions of their conquerors. To render this transition the more easy, their primitive religion had already been corrupted by the inroads of Egyptian theology; but at what period or through what channel, is involved in mystery.

[1] See *infra*, "Britany."

The well-known figures of Gallic deities, decorated with the caduceus of Hermes, are monuments of the fact. This god was probably the Theutates of Celtic mythology, the Theuth or Thoth of the Egyptian [1]; and identical with the Gothic Teut or Tuisto [2]. "The name *Tat*, *Tath*, or *Tait*," remarks Faber, "was well known to the ancient Irish," (whose priests we have observed were probably of the Gallic tribe of Druids.) "By this word they designated the first day of the month August, that being the month of harvest, and Tait being the god who presided over agriculture. The month which among the Egyptians corresponded with August was called by the name of the god Thoth [3]."

This remark of Faber brings to mind the singular connexion of the sacred serpent with *agriculture*, in the mythology of the Greeks. There we have Ceres, the goddess of *corn*, sitting in a chariot drawn by *serpents*. Triptolemus, the founder of the Eleusinian mysteries, was no sooner instructed by Ceres in the arts of agriculture, than he was presented with the *dracontic chariot* to carry him through the world,

[1] Vossius in Cæsar. Comment. lib. vi. p. 223.

[2] Faber, Pagan Idol. ii. 362. [3] Ibid. 365.

to dispense the same blessings among mankind which he had bestowed upon his own countrymen. And both in the Pythian temple of Epirus, and at Lanuvium in Italy were sacred serpents to whom the *farmers* of the vicinity resorted for an omen of a *good or bad harvest*.

When we consider that Thoth was the great promoter of Ophiolatreia in Phœnicia and Egypt, the coincidence will be remarkable, as obliquely bearing upon the great question in hand—the derivation of all mythology relating to the serpent, from the events in Paradise.

For, independently of the connexion of the serpent-tempter with the *tree* and its *fruit*, the memory of which has been wonderfully preserved throughout the world, one of the immediate consequences of the serpent's success in seducing our first parents, was *a general deterioration of the properties of the earth*[1]. Hence, in the confusion of truth and error, of which heathen mythology is almost entirely composed, would naturally arise the opinion that the serpent was in some mysterious manner influential upon agriculture: and the genius of superstition would

[1] Gen. iii. 17, 18.

very readily invest the reptile with the attribute of a god oracular to husbandmen.

To Teutates, or Mercury, the Druids of Gaul were accustomed to immolate human victims. There is nothing peculiar in this sacrificial observance, except its connexion with a singular opinion which borders so closely upon the doctrine of THE ATONEMENT, that I cannot pass it by. It is thus expressed by Cæsar[1]:—"PRO VITA HOMINIS NISI VITA HOMINIS REDDATUR, NON POSSE ALITER DEORUM IMMORTALIUM NUMEN PLACARI, ARBITRANTUR." The sacrifice of human victims was at one time universal, but in no religion has been preserved so clear a conception of the truth. The people who entertained it must have separated very early from the rest of the heathen, and retained their primeval errors almost unbroken.

In the Druids, then, we behold some of the first deviators from the faith of Noah; and the purer the druidism, the nearer the truth.

The other leading doctrines of the Druids correspond in simplicity with this remarkable opinion: *the unity of the Godhead*, and *the immortality of the soul*, being the foundation

[1] De Bello Gall. lib. vi. s. 16.

of their creed, before it was corrupted by the polytheism of Egypt transmitted through Phœnicia. It was in this corrupted state that the Romans found it.

THE SOLAR-SERPENT-WORSHIP of the Persians seems to have penetrated into Gaul; for "there is a mixed symbolic image at Arles, the principal part of which is that of a human person clothed with a veil, on which are wrought in relievo, the figures of the zodiac. Round this person THE DRAGON SERPENT winds his flexile course[1]." . . . . . .

But the most curious relic of the religion of the Gauls has been preserved in a piece of sculpture on the front of a temple at Montmorillon in Poitou, of which Montfaucon has given us an engraving[2]. It is thus described by this ingenious antiquary—"Over the gate of the temple are eight human figures of rude workmanship, which are probably deities. Of these eight there are six images of men placed in two

[1] Cradock's Literary Memoirs, ii. 163. The Ophite hierogram also has been recognized in Gaul. A sculpture of the *circle*, *wings*, and *two serpents*, exhibiting a Medusa's face, was found by Simeoni in the sixteenth century, at Clermont, in Auvergne.—*Marcel, Hist. des Gaules.*

[2] Suppl. to vol. ii. 249.

groups, three and three together . . . . . the figures terminating the sides are women. One of them has long hair hanging down before her, and is dressed very like the women now-a-days. She holds her hands on her sides, and wears gloves like those now used. *That on the other end is naked, and has* TWO SERPENTS *twisting round her legs, &c.* Now these figures being all clothed, except the last mentioned, in garments apparently of a sacerdotal character, were probably intended to represent the habits of the priests and priestesses of the eight principal gods of the Gauls. For we have other images of the Gallic gods very differently habited from these. We may infer, therefore, that the naked female, with the two serpents, was the priestess of the deity to whom the serpent was more particularly sacred. A conclusion which is rendered reasonable by the fact, that the Ophite deity of the Egyptians was known to the Druids of Britain, and consequently must have been known to those of Gaul. Our inference, thus corroborated, is still farther illustrated by the customs prevalent at the Pythian temples of Epirus and Lanuvium, in which the god was *a serpent*, and the officiating priestess *naked*.

It is difficult to ascertain the connecting link between the several chains of Ophiolatreia through the world; but it is probable that some intercourse, unremembered in history, existed between the Grecian and Gallic states at a very early period; by means of which the religions of Egypt and Greece may have been partially transmitted to Gaul. To strengthen such a conjecture, Cæsar informs us, that the Druids of Gaul were acquainted with the Greek language, or at least the Greek alphabet:—"publicis privatisque rationibus GRÆCIS LITERIS utuntur[1]."

The chief seat of the Druidical religion, however, was Britain, as the same writer assures us; to which country the young Druids of Gaul were sent for their education[2].

4. BRITANY. Connected with Gaul, if not itself a part of Gaul, is the interesting country of Britany; a country in which the ancient religion of the Celts found refuge when banished from almost every other by the Roman arms. Many vestiges of Ophiolatreia are still visible among the antiquities and customs of Britany. The

[1] Comm. lib. vi. s. xiv. p. 219.

[2] Lib. vi. p. 218.

dragon and the serpent are favorite ornaments upon the walls of the churches, of which that of Landevan is a curious example; as if they had been carved by the early Christians upon the exterior of their sanctuaries, to invite the hesitating Ophite to enter the portals of a *consecrated* building; *serpents upon the wall* being the sign of *consecration*[1].

But whether this was really the case or not, it is certain that the first inhabitants of Britany were worshippers of the god BEL, whose name may be still recognized in that of the Christian priesthood which has succeeded to his holy places. In the Breton language the word "*Priest*" is rendered "*Belech*," which appears to be the same as the *Balak* of Scripture, who was the priest and king of Moab. It has been already remarked that, in the Ophite religion, it was the general custom to name the priesthood after the god of their adoration. Thus the priestess of OUB was also called *Oub;* the priestess of PYTHON, *Pythia;* the high-priest of C'NEPH, *Icnuphis*, &c. *Balak* or *Belech* may similarly indicate a priest of BEL-THE-DRAGON. BEL and the DRAGON are always united, and

[1] Persius, Sat. i. 113.

Balak would bear this signification if, as Stukeley asserts, the ancient name of a *serpent* in the Celtic language was "*Hak.*" This word is now obsolete; but an ancient casuistical writer of Britany cited by Pelletier in his dictionary of the Breton language, has the following passage:—

Henvell an diaoul hac an aerouant.

i. e. "*As the devil Hac the serpent.*"

Pelletier translates *hac* as if it were only the conjunction "*and:*" but it *may* be the old word "*Hac,*" a snake, which was known to the ancient Persians, and enters into the name "Takshac," of the *serpent-tribes* of the mountain *Tak.*

General de Penhouët, in his memoir on Ophiolatreia, lately read before the Academy of Nantes, mentions a curious custom which prevailed in the bourg of Sérent in the Morbihan, before the French Revolution, which seems to have been the relic of an Ophite ceremony. This was a procession of the villagers, in which they carried a *Gwiber* or snake, crying as they advanced, "*Let him beware who will of the Gwiber Draig*[1], *peace to Molac!*" The tradition of the

[1] *Gwiber Draig;* i. e. *serpent-dragon.*

neighbourhood stated that in former times, a monster lived in the woods adjoining, who devoured infants. He was slain by a gentleman of the place, and hence the cry, "*Peace* (or *silence) to Molac.*" A Breton family still bears the name of Molac with the motto "*Gric à Molac en bon espoir.*" M. de Penhouët thinks that the word *Molac* should be rather *Moloc;* and alludes to the heathen deity of that name to whom the idolatrous Ammonites offered their children. But he adds, that in the immediate vicinity of Sérent, where the procession was held, is a commune called Molac. I will not pretend to determine whether or not Moloch, the god of the Ammonites, ever had an altar in Britany; but it is certainly remarkable, that many Breton customs, and not a few of the idols found in the district, have a strong resemblance to those of Oriental countries. Thus a rock in the Morbihan is carved into a form exactly pourtraying the head of the Egyptian Anubis. A statue of the Syrian goddess Lilith, whose head-dress resembles that of Isis, is still standing, almost in its primitive perfection, at the chateau of Quinipili in the parish of Baud, and for many ages has furnished the pattern for the caps of

the female peasantry of the commune: while the male portion of the villagers, throughout lower Britany, wear round their loins a chequered linen sash, which they call a "*turban*," inducing the conjecture that they were of oriental descent, and upon adopting the customs of Europe, removed their *turbans* from the head to the waist, without laying aside their forms or names. Other indications of an eastern origin are strongly marked among the peasantry of Lower Britany [1]. It is therefore not improbable that the Moloch of the Ammonites might also have had an altar at Sérent.

But the most indisputable memorial of "the dragon," is to be found in those eternal columns which have stamped his image upon the plains of Erdeven and Carnac, and display to the eyes of admiring ages the remains of a dracontium which must once have covered a territory *at least eight miles in length*. The description of this temple, which was certainly one of the most stupendous in the world, I reserve for the chapter especially dedicated to the subject of DRACONTIA. Other indications of Ophiolatreia claim our attention which are better suited to

[1] See Penhouët Archéol. Armoric. *passim*.

this part of our inquiry. Among these we may consider the oracle of BEL, which has left a sufficient record of its existence in the name of the parish in which it is situated, which is still called *Belz* or *Bels*, being evidently a contraction of the Roman word *Belus*. This spot I visited in August and September 1831, in company with General de Penhouët, a gentleman of Rennes, well known for his antiquarian knowledge and ingenious writings on the antiquities of Armorica. Among other interesting places, he directed me to the island of St. Cado, to THE ORACLE OF BEL. This is a small rectangular inclosure, about three feet in length and two in height, contained by four slabs of stone. Over it is built a chapel dedicated to St. Cado, who is said to have landed upon this spot when he came to evangelize this part of Britany. The chapel and oracle stand upon a small island in the river Estel, which is joined to the main land by a causeway. The architect of this causeway, tradition states, was no less a personage than Satan himself, who undertook to build it at the request of St. Cado, on condition that he should have the first living thing that passed over it—hoping, as the saint was the only human

being on the island, he might himself be the unlucky passenger. By the assistance of his *wife*, who carried many of the materials in her apron, the Devil accomplished his task in a single night: and for his reward received the next morning a *cat*, which the cunning saint sent over before himself. To the chapel of St. Cado, many of the devout peasants of the Morbihan resort in the faithful expectation of being miraculously cured of deafness by thrusting their heads into the consecrated hole above mentioned. The guide who conducted us was an implicit believer in the miraculous powers of the holy corner, and declared, upon putting in his head, that he distinctly heard a sound! This was mere imagination—but it is probable that the purpose to which the place was formerly devoted, namely, the oracular responses of the priestess of Bel, may have left this superstition as a feeble record of the once famous Oracle.

It is remarkable that St. Cado is said to have been the Christian missionary, who, landing upon this spot, expelled from it a *colony of serpents!* by which tradition I understand the conversion to Christianity, of the *serpent worshippers* of Belz.

Similar stories are told of other Breton saints. St. Maudet established himself in an island near Treguier which bears his name, and cleared it in like manner of *serpents*. A St. Paul likewise settled in the Ile de Bas, which at that time was infested by an enormous dragon. Being solicited by the people to deliver them from this monster, "he passed his stole under his neck, and plunged him into the sea;" and the place of this achievement is still pointed out as "the dragon's leap." "How are we to understand these things," ingeniously demands M. de Penhouët, "if we do not look upon them as a transparent veil through which we perceive the *efficacy of baptism administered to the followers of serpent-worship, who upon their conversion were plunged into the water*[1]?"

It is extremely probable that these and all similar traditions relate solely to the success of the first Christian missionaries over the votaries of the serpent. But the means by which they effected this desirable change in the religion of the idolaters were perhaps more politic than scriptural; more like the founders of a temporal than a spiritual kingdom. Finding the difficulty

[1] Arch. Armoric.

of a complete conversion, they were contented with a partial, and rather than not gain any converts, they sacrificed the consistency and simplicity of the Christian religion. They permitted the Ophites to retain many of their idolatrous opinions and practices even after baptism, considering, perhaps, that half a Christian was better than an entire Pagan, and hoping that though the father might be only an accommodating, the son would, in time, become a sincere believer in the Gospel. Hence we see the *serpent*, the emblem of consecration, carved upon the exterior of churches; such as Landevan, Dinan, and others. Hence, also, the introduction of the SUN and the SERPENT into ecclesiastical processions. But while they thus blended the old religion with the new, they endeavoured to remove scandal from the Christian congregation, by prominently exhibiting in a well-understood allegory, the triumph of Christianity over Ophiolatreia. Thus the church of Landevan, near Belz, which might have invited the Ophite to enter its gates by the *serpent* carved upon its exterior wall, showed the Christian, at its altar, a statue of St. Michael trampling under foot "the apostate dragon." And thus, also, the

Solar Mount of Carnac, beneath which the dragon-temple winds his course, bears on its summit a chapel of the Archangel, the destroyer of that dragon's spiritual prototype. There was, therefore, much of the serpent's subtilty in the method which undermined the serpent's kingdom.

Du Fresne, in his glossary upon the word "Draco," explains the part which was borne by the dragon in the ecclesiastical processions of the Church of Rome. "An effigy of a dragon is wont to be carried, by which is designated the devil himself, or heresy, over both of which the Church triumphs." Again, in speaking of the customs of a particular monastery, he says, "On Palm Sunday there are two processions, in which the standard and the *dragon* precede. Holy water and a censer without fire; a cross and *dragon on a pole* are borne in procession. One of the boys, however, carries a lighted candle in a lantern, that fire may be at hand in case the light *which is in the dragon's mouth* should be extinguished."

In these customs there are strong traces of Ophiolatreia as connected with the worship of the sun. "The fire in the dragon's mouth,"

which they were so careful to keep alive, reminds us of the holy fire so reverently cherished by the children of the sun; and "the dragon upon the pole" recalls the standard of the Ophites in every country where they reigned: while the whole ceremony may be considered as a lively representation of an Ophite procession as it advanced through the sinuous parallelitha of Carnac.

CARNAC, however, is not the only dracontium of Britany. The whole of the department of the Morbihan may be considered as the *terra sancta* of BEL. Fragments of serpent temples may be seen in many communes, surrounding the great dracontium of Carnac, like village churches about the cathedral of their diocese. Even the islands upon the coasts not unfrequently present some striking memorial of the same prevailing worship. An island in the Morbihan which contains the relics of a dracontium, still commemorates, by its name, its ancient dedication. It is called "*the Island of the Monks*," probably from having been colonized in remote ages by the Druids who officiated in the dracontium: for I believe there are no remains of any Christian monastery from which it may have derived the appellation. At the western ex-

tremity of the dracontium is a long barrow, one end of which being broken, disclosed a very beautiful kistvaën. This spot is singularly called *Penab:* i. e. "*the head* of AB:" and as there is no vestige of a house upon the site so designated, the name of Penab must have belonged to the temple, and indicated that part of it which, like the "Hakpen" of Abury, was the "serpent's head."

A more minute examination of the antiquities of Britany, assisted by a knowledge of the Breton language, would throw much light upon the ancient religion of that interesting country, which I cannot but think, was, at the least, a modification of that Ophiolatreia which, in almost every region of the world, had its altars, its dragon temples, and its human victims[1].

A longer stay in Britany might have enabled me to bring forward many more proofs of its aboriginal worship of the serpent: but the temple of Carnac, which I shall describe in a subsequent chapter, will abundantly establish the argument

[1] For a description of the sacrificial altar of the temple of Carnac, and for proofs of the barbarous custom of human sacrifices in Britany, I beg to refer the reader to my paper on Dracontia, in the 25th vol. of the Archæologia.

which I have undertaken. This temple I have minutely and thoroughly investigated; and the plan published, both in the Archæologia, and in this volume (in which a restoration has been attempted,) will convince any but those against whose previously expressed theories it may militate, that it was truly a DRACONTIUM—a temple of the SOLAR SERPENT.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER IV.

SERPENT-WORSHIP IN AMERICA.

CHAPTER IV.

SERPENT-WORSHIP IN AMERICA.

I. MEXICO.—Every feature in the religion of the New World, discovered by Cortez and Pizarro, indicates an origin common to the superstitions of Egypt and Asia. The same solar worship, the same pyramidal monuments, and the same concomitant OPHIOLATREIA distinguish them all.

From Acosta[1] we learn, that "*the temple of Vitziliputzli was built of great stones in fashion of snakes tied one to another, and the circuit was called 'the circuit of snakes,'*" because the walls of the enclosure were covered with the figures of snakes[2]. This god, Vitziliputzli, "held in his right hand a staff cut in the form of a serpent; and the four corners of the ark, in which he was seated, terminated each with

[1] Ch. xiii. *London*, 1604. [2] *Herrera.*

a carved representation of the head of a serpent [1]."

Vitziliputzli was an azure figure, from whose sides projected the heads of two serpents: his right hand leaned upon a staff shaped like a serpent [2].

The Mexican century was represented by a circle, having the sun in the centre, surrounded by the symbols of the years. The circumference was A SERPENT twisted into four knots at the cardinal points [3].

The Mexican month was divided into twenty days; the *serpent* and *dragon* symbolized two of them. In Mexico there was also a temple dedicated to "the god of the air;" and the door of it was formed so as to resemble a *serpent's mouth* [4].

The Mexicans, however, were not contented with the *symbolical* worship of the sacred serpent. Like many other nations of the Ophite

[1] Faber, P. I. v. 455, citing Purchas's Pilgrims.

[2] Gottfrid. Hist. Antipod. part i. p. 31, apud Gronovium.

[3] Clavigero, vol. i. p. 296.

[4] Faber, P. I. ii. 285, citing Purchas.—It is a curious coincidence of ideas, that in Ephesians ii. 2, the DEVIL is styled "*the prince of the power of the* AIR."

family, they kept *live serpents* as household gods in their private dwellings. An intelligent traveller[1], to whom the literary republic is much indebted for his observations on the Mexican idolatry, informs, us, that "the rattle-snake was an object of veneration and worship among them:" and that "representations of this reptile, and others of its species, are very commonly met with among the remains of their ancient idolatry." "The finest that is known to exist is to be seen in a deserted part of the cloister of the Dominican convent, opposite to the palace of the inquisition. It is coiled up in an irritated, erect position, with the jaws extended, and in the act of gorging an elegantly dressed female, who appears in the mouth of this enormous reptile, crushed and lacerated."

A cast of this terrific idol was brought over to England by Mr. Bullock, and fully corroborates the reiterated assertions of the Spaniards who first invaded Mexico, that the people of that country worshipped an idol in the form of a serpent. Bernal Dias del Castillo, who accompanied Cortez, was introduced by Monte-

[1] Mr. Bullock.

zuma into the interior of the principal temple, the description of which he gives in the following manner:—"When we had ascended to the summit of the temple, we observed on the platform, as we passed, the large stones whereon were placed the victims who were to be sacrificed. Here was a great figure which represented a DRAGON, and much blood spilt. . . . . Cortez then addressed Montezuma, and requested that he would do him the favour to show us his gods. Montezuma having first consulted the priests, led us into a tower where was a kind of saloon. Here were two altars, highly adorned with richly-wrought timbers on the roof; and over the altars, gigantic figures, representing fat men. The one on the right hand was Huitzilopochtli, their war god, with a great face and terrible eyes. This figure was entirely covered with gold and jewels, and *his body bound with golden serpents.* Before the idol was a pan of incense, with three hearts of human victims, which were burning, mixed with copal. . . . . On the left was the other great figure, with a face like a bear. . . . . He was the god of the infernal regions . . . . . his body was covered with figures representing devils with tails of

serpents . . . . . In this place they had a drum of most enormous size, the head of which was made of the skins of *large serpents* . . . . . At a little distance from this temple stood a tower . . . . . at the door stood frightful idols . . . . . like *serpents* and devils; and before them were tables and knives for sacrifice."

For this extract I am indebted to a work of Mr. Bullock, which, under the unassuming form of a descriptive pamphlet, contains much that is instructive, both in references and original remarks. He tells us, that from the great serpent, above mentioned, smaller ones were modelled in stone, and probably kept by the Mexicans as Penates. One of these he brought over to England. Such miniature copies of their gods were frequently taken in Egypt, and the custom prevails in other places—the Burmese universally follow it.

Mr. Bullock brought over also from Mexico a cast of an idol, which he calls "the goddess of war," and thus describes it:—

"This monstrous idol is, with its pedestal, twelve feet high, and four feet wide . . . . . Its form is partly human, and the rest composed of *rattle-snakes* and the tiger. The head, enor-

mously wide, seems that of two *rattle-snakes* united; the fangs hanging out of the mouth, on which the still palpitating hearts of the unfortunate victims were rubbed as an act of *the most acceptable oblation.* The body is that of a deformed human frame, and the place of arms supplied by the heads of *rattle-snakes*, placed on square plinths, and united by fringed ornaments. Round the waist is a girdle, which was originally covered with gold; and beneath this, reaching nearly to the ground, and partly covering its deformed cloven feet, a drapery entirely composed of wreathed *rattle-snakes*, which the natives call '*a garment of serpents.*' . . . Between the feet, descending from the body, another wreathed *serpent* rests his head upon the ground."

We learn from Acosta[1], that the Mexicans sacrificed human victims to the god Virachoca; and that the head of the unhappy creature about to be sacrificed was held back in a wooden collar "wrought in form of *a snake.*"

Peter Martyr[2] also mentions a large serpent-idol at Campeachy, made of stones and bitumen, in the act of devouring a marble lion. An

[1] 382. [2] De Orbe Novo, 291.

engraving of this idol is given in Ogilby's America, p. 77. When first seen by the Spaniards it was warm with the blood of human victims.

But of all the works which may be consulted upon this subject, that of M. Aglio, on "Mexican Antiquities," is most deserving of notice. It contains fac-similes of nearly all the Azteck paintings known to be in Europe, together with lithographic representations of sculptures, and other monuments of this interesting people. These paintings and sculptures abound with evidences of Mexican Ophiolatreia, and prove that there was scarcely a Mexican deity who was not symbolized by a serpent or a dragon. Many deities appear holding serpents in their hands; and small figures of priests are represented *with a snake over each head.* This reminds us, forcibly, of the priests of the Egyptian Isis, who are described in sculpture, with the sacred asp upon the head, and a cone in the left hand. And to confirm the original mutual connexion of all the serpent-worshippers throughout the world—the Mexican paintings, as well as the Egyptian and Persian hieroglyphics, describe THE OPHITE HIEROGRAM of the intertwined

serpents, in almost all its variations[1]. A very remarkable one occurs in M. Allard's collection of sculptures; in which the dragons, forming it, have each *a man's head in his mouth!* The gods of Mexico are frequently pictured fighting with serpents and dragons; and gods, and sometimes men, are represented *in conversation* with the same loathsome creatures. There is scarcely, indeed, a feature in the mystery of Ophiolatreia, which may not be recognised in the Mexican superstitions.

We perceive, therefore, that in the kingdom of Mexico the serpent was sacred, and emblematic of *more gods than one:* an observation which may be extended to almost every other nation which adored the symbolical serpent. This is a remarkable and valuable fact; and it discovers in Ophiolatreia another feature of its aboriginal character. For it proves *the serpent* to have been a symbol of *intrinsic divinity*, and not a mere representative of peculiar properties which belong to some gods, and not to others.

The serpent also entered into the religion of

[1] Aglio, vol. iii. *Borgian Collection*, plates 36, 38, &c.—Vol. iv. pl. 13. *Sculpture in the Collection of M. Latour Allard, Paris.*

the Mexicans as a *charm*. Whenever a person was ill, a priest was immediately sent for, "who, having perfumed the patient, and shaved off his hair, hung *snake's bones about his neck*[1]."

In Couliacan, Nunnez de Gusman found, in the year 1531, the houses filled with "thousands of serpents mingled together." And we are told that "the inhabitants showed great reverence to these serpents because, as they said, *the devil often appeared to them in that form*[2]."

II. PERU.—The Peruvians are charged with the same superstition of serpent-worship as the Mexicans. "They worshipped," says Vossius, "the goddess Isis, and were accustomed to represent her with two serpents at her side[3]."

Whether this image represented Isis, or some other deity, it is certain that *actual* as well as *symbolical* Ophiolatreia prevailed in Peru. For, "in the temple of Pachamana, near Lima, tradition states that *the devil did speak visibly*, and gave answer by his oracles; and that sometimes they did see a *spotted snake*[4]."

Of this kind was the "nachash" of the

[1] Ogilby, p. 277.
[2] Ibid. 286.
[3] Voss. de Idol. l. iii. c. 13.
[4] Acosta, c. 5.

Hebrews, and the " purple-backed snake" of the Greeks, both used in divination. The tradition of Pachamana forcibly reminds us of the story of the Æsculapian serpent of Epidaurus, who on important occasions glided from his sanctuary, and showed himself to his votaries.

In the province of Topira in Peru, the Spaniards saw a temple, in front of which was a moat containing a vast image of " a serpent of divers metals, with his tayle in his mouth. A man was sacrificed before it every year [1]."

In another part of the work, from which the above information is derived, we read that " the Peruviane *worshipped snakes, and kept them pictured in their temples and houses* [2]."

The worship of the serpent in Peru was eventually superseded by the Solar Superstition of the Incas. Having suppressed it in their own country they carried on a war of proselytism in the neighbouring states. Tupac Yupanqui, the eleventh Inca, conquered the Chacapuyans, and " killed their deity—a *snake*." This province lay eastward of Cassamarca. He next overcame the Huacrachuca, who also " worshipped snakes and

[1] Purchas, part iv. p. 1560.

[2] Ibid. p. 1478.

kept them always pictured in their houses and temples [1]."

The people of Manta who were conquered by Huayna Capac, among other things "worshipped serpents of prodigious bigness [2]."

"Blas Valeras, an author, who in loose papers wrote of the Indies, describes those who live in *Antis* as more brutal than the beasts themselves; for they have neither God, nor law, nor virtue, nor have they any idols or worship, *unless sometimes when the Devil presents himself in the form of a serpent or other animal,* they then worship and adore him [3]."

From these incidental notices, scattered up and down among the writings of the Spaniards, who rather accidentally alluded to, than designedly investigated the religion of the New World, we find that the worship of the sacred serpent had its votaries in almost every place where man had a domicile.

With these cursory notices, we must take leave of Spanish America—more in astonishment that so much information, valuable to

[1] Harris's Collec. of Voyages, i. 784.

[2] Garcilasso de la Vega, book ix. c. 8.

[3] Ibid. book i. c. 4.

literature and Christian theology, has escaped the barbarism of the church of Rome, than in disappointment that so little of authentic history has been preserved for our instruction.

English America being in a state of extreme rudeness when the first settlers occupied it; and these settlers being either illiterate themselves, or engrossed by a religion so exclusively severe as to despise or abhor inquiry into any other; we have little or no account of the superstitions of the native Indians upon which we can rely. I have seen, indeed, a book, printed about that period, purporting to be an account of the religion of the Virginians, in which these people are represented as worshipping graven images; and, among the rest, that of a serpent upon a pillar. But the whole work is written in a manner so extravagantly credulous, that I did not care to preserve even the memory of its title-page. Besides, the rude state of the arts among these Indians could not have permitted them to arrive at such a perfection in sculpture as is there represented. The book is to be found in Sion College library.

A more respectable authority, however, occurs in Purchas's Pilgrims, who, by the inci-

dental mention of a trivial circumstance, would indnce us to infer, that the worship of the serpent was not altogether unknown even in these inhospitable wilds. *The chief priest* among the Virginians was observed to wear on his head a sacerdotal ornament of "*snake skins tied together by the tails*[1]."

Now this circumstance, though apparently trivial, is not to be overlooked; for it brings to recollection an Egyptian custom which certainly prevailed among the votaries of the sacred serpent. The priests of Isis were, in particular, notified by the figure of an *asp* upon their bonnets; and we sometimes see a priest represented in sculpture with *a small serpent upon his bare head.* Again, *serpents in the hair* were a necessary part of the ornaments of a bacchanal. A similar ornament is observed on the heads of the priests in M. Aglio's Mexican antiquities; and the Mexicans were certainly serpent-worshippers. Is it not, therefore, possible, that the head-dress of the chief priest, among the wild Virginians, may have had a similar respect to the god of his adoration, or to the symbol of that deity?

[1] Purchas, part 4, p. 1701.

The accompanying plate, which represents an Indian of the country N. W. of Louisiana, exhibits a priest of the Solar-Ophite religion. The Sun and Serpent tattooed upon his breast, and pictured upon the instrument in his hand are curious illustrations of ancient customs. The former especially remind us of the "stigmata[1]" alluded to by *Job*, and St. *Paul*, which were borne on the body of the priests of all the old religions; and are still used to distinguish the Brahminical sects.

There is also an obscure Canadian tradition which seems to have belonged to the superstition of the Serpent. Whenever it thundered the natives believed "that the Devil was endeavouring to vomit a horrible serpent, and by straining to evacuate the same, rent the clouds and caused thunder[2]."

Among the islands of the Southern Ocean we can hardly expect to find any traces of this idolatry. It is curious, however, to observe that in New Zealand there is a tradition that the serpent once spoke with a human voice[3].

These islanders also believed, that in the in-

[1] See the remarks on the *Thauma*, chap. ii.

[2] Ogilby, p. 132. [3] Christian Observer, 1810, p. 724.

An Indian inhabiting the Country N.W. West of Louisiana. in 1741.

London, Published by J.G. & F. Rivington St. Paul's Church Yard & Waterloo Place. 1833

J. Basire. sc

terior of the island is an enormous Lizard, animated by an Evil Spirit, who preys upon the human race. The Lizard worship prevails also in Africa, and is kindred to that of the serpent.

The inhabitants of the Tonga islands also believe that "the primitive gods sometimes come into the bodies of lizards, porpoises, and sea snakes—and hence these animals are much respected[1]."

There is a remarkable passage in Tasman's voyage to the South Seas; which, if it does not actually *prove* the original Ophiolatreia of these islanders, yet tends to corroborate the hypothesis. Speaking of Rotterdam island he says, that the inhabitants know nothing about religion or divine worship; they have no idols, relics, or priests, but they have nevertheless superstitions: *for I saw a man take up a water snake which was near his boat, and put it respectfully on his head, and then again into the water.*"

I will not insist that this, and the preceding facts are *irrefragable* proofs of original Ophiolatreia:—but I cannot help thinking it *possible* that such *may* be the case. The Polynesians are apparently derived from Malaya, and the

[1] Dillon's Discovery of La Perouse, ii. p. 12.

Ophite superstition was once very prevalent in all the neighbouring countries of Asia. But beyond this possibility I would not press the argument. *Valeat quantum valet.*

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER V.

HEATHEN FABLES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE FALL OF MAN.

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HAVING shown that THE SERPENT, as *an emblem of divinity*, as *a charm*, as *an oracle*, or as A GOD, entered into the worship of almost every considerable nation of the ancient world, I proceed to consider what traditionary evidence to the seduction of our first parents, by the serpent, is afforded in the remains of their respective mythologies.

In the progress of corrupt religion, whatever was originally a pure patriarchal tradition became gradually less pure, not only by the addition of circumstances entirely fabulous, but also by the admixture of *other patriarchal traditions*, so blended together, that every fable into which they entered became still more obscure and marvellous. The inquirer into truth is, therefore, frequently encumbered with the antecedent

necessity of separating fact from fact, before he can hope to extricate truth from error. The shades are so indistinctly thrown together, that he must first seek to separate one patriarchal tradition from another, before he can pronounce, with any degree of precision, where the light of revelation ends, and the darkness of mythology begins.

But, at the same time, the candid and patient inquirer has the satisfaction to feel assured that scarcely any leading fable of heathen mythology is altogether the offspring of a poetical imagination. "Non *res ipsas gestas* finxerunt poetæ, sed *rebus gestis* addiderunt quendam colorem," is the shrewd observation of Lactantius [1]; and the more we read, the more convinced are we of its correctness.

One of the most remarkable of these compound heathen fables is that of TYPHON. And this has been made subservient to several explanations, more or less satisfactory as the writer has approached, or receded from, the only test of truth—the Scriptures.

Bryant and Faber have determined that the

[1] De falsâ relig. lib. i. c. 2.

fable of Typhon has reference to the deluge: there are, however, other characteristics which ought not to be overlooked. Of their valuable information I avail myself cheerfully, in separating one truth from the fable; but another remains, of far more importance to the individual interests of mankind, and this also I will endeavour to elucidate.

I. TYPHON.

An Egyptian fable; chiefly preserved by Plutarch, in his dissertation on Isis and Osiris; noticed also by Hyginus, fab. 152, *and by Apollodorus, lib.* i. *c.* 6.

The fable of Typhon may have been embellished by the traditions of the deluge; but for its *origin* we must look higher. All tradition cannot be supposed to have centered in the deluge; for it is not probable that the sons and daughters of Noah, who survived the flood, would have been silent about the stupendous events which preceded it.

The creation of the world and of man; his happiness in paradise, and his expulsion from

it through sin; the cause of this sin, and its consequences; THE SERPENT TEMPTER and THE "REDEEMING ANGEL[1]"—would form natural and interesting subjects for the paternal instruction of these elders to their children. Is it surprising, then, that their children should preserve as sacred those oral traditions, from the recital of which they had received both instruction and amusement; and the remembrance of which, probably, formed part of their religious service of praise and thanksgiving? Is it not rather probable that they would themselves transmit them to their children's children? And if, in the lapse of ages, a poetic imagination, or a desire to excite astonishment, should envelope these truths in the robe of fiction, can we wonder at the circumstance? We have much more reason for wonder that so little fiction, rather than so much, has obscured the truth.

There are some circumstances interwoven with the attributes of Typhon, which would lead us to conjecture, that the first interference of this monster, in mundane affairs, was his

[1] Gen. xlviii. 16.

seduction of our first parents UNDER THE FORM OF A SERPENT.

Typhon was the EVIL SPIRIT of the Egyptians. Jablonski derives his name from the two Coptic words, *Theu-ph-ou*, "spiritus-malus:" a derivation which corresponds with the remark of Plutarch: "The Egyptians commonly called Typhon Κακὸν Δαίμονα [1]." The history of this dæmon will be found to be parallel with that of Satan in Scripture.

Hyginus informs us, that Typhon was the son of Tartarus *(Hell)* and the Earth: that *he made war against Jupiter for dominion*, and, being struck by lightning, was *thrown flaming to the earth*, where Mount Ætna was placed upon him. Tartarus ex Terrâ procreavit Typhonem, immani magnitudine, specieque portentosa, *cui centum capita draconum* ex humeris enata erant. *Hic Jovem provocavit, si vellet secum de regno certare.* Jovis fulmine ardenti pectus ejus percussit. Cui cum flagraret, montem Ætnam, qui est in Siciliâ, super eum imposuit: qui ex eo adhuc ardere dicitur.—*Hyginus*, fab. 152.

Pindar tells us, that "Typhon, the hun-

[1] De Iside et Osiride, p. 380.

dred-headed *enemy of the gods*, lies in *Tartarus*[1]."

The war in heaven, *for dominion*, is evidently a version of the patriarchal tradition recorded by St. Jude, of which a vision was subsequently revealed to St. John. "There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: *he was cast into the earth*, and his angels were cast out with him[2]."

Under the same character, of *a rebel against the gods*, Typhon is celebrated in Grecian mythology by the name of Typhoeus[3], and in the Syrian by the name of Ophioneus. The latter is the same as the serpent-god Ophion or Obion, whose worship we have traced in the preceding pages.

This remarkable tradition, of "a war in heaven," is preserved also in the mythologies of the Persians, Hindûs, and Celts.

[1] Pythia, 1. [2] Rev. xii. 7, &c. [3] Hesiod. Theogon.

The terrestrial history of Typhon, which Plutarch records, is briefly this. Being envious of his brother, Osiris, he put him to death, placed the dismembered body in a chest, and set him adrift on the Nile. But after some time Osiris was either restored to life, or recovered by his wife, Isis, in a mutilated state; for the fable admits of either conclusion.

The principal features in this fable are,

1st, The envy of Typhon.

2dly, The murder of his brother in consequence.

3dly, His brother's restoration to life by means of his wife.

It is extremely probable that, in this short fable, *three* independent patriarchal truths, at least, have been mixed together: the murder of Abel through the jealousy of Cain; the preservation of Noah in the ark; and the fall and redemption of man. The first is sufficiently obvious; the second has been adopted by those writers who look upon Typhon as a personification of the deluge; and the third I will endeavour to establish by such proofs as have occurred to me in the ordinary course of reading.

We are assured by the author of the Book of Wisdom, that "through envy of the devil came death into the world[1]:" and our Lord informs us, that the devil "was a murderer from the beginning[2]." This, of course, alludes more particularly to the *spiritual* murder of Adam; but his loss of immortality, in consequence of following the suggestions of the devil, might very naturally form the foundation of a fable, in which things spiritual would be accommodated to things temporal, in accordance with the genius and practice of mythology. All that we can therefore reasonably expect, in tracing an agreement between history and fable, is a *common cause* assigned by each to a fact which each professes to record; and a few leading characteristics, relative to the *transaction* and *the agents*, common to both the historical and mythological tradition.

In the history, and in the fable, "*Envy*" was the cause of the spiritual or the carnal murder. *The same being*, who made "a war in heaven," and was "cast down" from thence "upon the earth," was the agent in each: and in either case he is represented in a *dracontic form*. The

[1] Wisd. ii. 24. [2] John viii. 44.

devil deceived Eve under the figure of a serpent: such a figure was also attributed to Typhon, at least in part; and a *partial* resemblance, such as this, is more satisfactory than a complete similitude. Typhon is a monster with a human head, and dracontic arms and legs. According to Apollodorus [1], "*an hundred serpents' heads issued from his hands, and his legs terminated in two enormous snakes.*" Hyginus tells us, that "*an hundred serpents' heads issued from his shoulders.*" The figure, therefore, was partly *human*, and partly *dracontic;* and in such we should have expected that the genius of mythology would clothe the serpent-tempter. For the tradition of the serpent, *speaking with a human voice*, would very naturally adorn the serpent of the fable with *a human body* [2].

The being, therefore, who deprived Adam and Osiris of life, was THE EVIL SPIRIT, and he was corporeally united with the serpent.

It should not be concealed, however, that Jablonski does not think that the Egyptian

[1] Lib. i. c. 6. s. 3.

[2] Thus in a Mexican painting, in the Borgian Collection, there is a god with *two* heads: one *human*, and the other *a serpent's.*—*Aglio. Mex. Ant.* vol. iii.

Typhon was the same as the Greek Typhoeus, to whom the above description rather belongs. He says that Typhon was not a monster, human and dracontic. There can be little doubt however, but that the Grecian fable, and even name of Typhoeus, is borrowed from the Egyptian fable and name of Typhon. For if *Typhon* be derived, as Jablonski contends, from *Theu-ph-ou*, *Typhoeus* comes as near, or nearer, to the root. I conceive the fact to be simply *this*: that the Egyptian fable has been divided into *two* by the Greeks, and that whatever attribute of *Typhon* is wanting in *Typhoeus*, is to be found in PYTHON.

The fall of Adam is again graphically described in the sculptured images of his counterpart Osiris, who is sometimes represented *in the midst of the volumes of a serpent*, as we learn from Montfaucon.

So far, then, the history and the fable coincide. We can, however, pursue the parallel a little farther. The fall of Adam being produced by the agency of the serpent, his recovery was to be effected by "the woman's seed." This part of the truth is expressed in the fable by the restoration of Osiris to life through the instrumentality of his wife Isis,

and the vanquishing of Typhon by *their son* ORUS [1]. It is a singular part of the fable, that Osiris, when restored to life, was restored in a *mutilated condition;* which may be an allusion, not obscure, to the *imperfection* of the redeemed man, compared with his perfection before the fall. The nature of the imperfection mentioned in the fable, may have been suggested by a corrupt tradition of the first consequences of the fall, as stated in Genesis iii. 7. Plutarch informs us, that when Orus was contending with Typhon, Thueris, the concubine of the latter, went over to the former, but *was pursued by a serpent*, which was, however, destroyed by the attendants of Orus. So that throughout the whole of this confused, but remarkable legend, THE SERPENT seems to be most singularly involved, as allied to TYPHON.

Putting all these facts together, I cannot but be persuaded that the original characters of the fable were historical persons, and that these were no other than ADAM and EVE, represented by OSIRIS and ISIS; the SERPENT-TEMPTER, by TYPHON; and the victorious "WOMAN'S SEED," by ORUS. A conclusion

[1] Herodot. ii. 156.

which is corroborated by the remarkable fact, that ORUS is considered by the Greek writers to have been the same as APOLLO[1]; and Apollo, it is well known, was the destroyer of the serpent Python, *which had persecuted his mother Latona.* Whether with Gale, therefore, we derive ORUS from אור, (LIGHT); or with Jablonski, from the coptic *U-er*, (THE CAUSE), the result will be the same; a correspondence with a *title* or an *attribute* of the "woman's seed," as "*a Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*[2];" or as "*the Word by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made*[3]."

Orus, after his victory over Typhon, is said to have reigned "happily," and was *the last* of the Egyptian dæmon kings[4]; thus in every respect fulfilling the attributes of THE MESSIAH, who, having bruised the serpent's head, shall reign for ever and ever, when "all enemies are put under his feet."

Further, it is to be observed, that Plutarch calls Typhon "*an enemy* to Isis;" affirming that

[1] Herodot. ii. 144. Plutarch, Diodorus, &c.

[2] John i. 9. [3] John i. 3.

[4] Jablonski, Panth. Æg. l. ii. p. 204.

he derived his name from the word τετυφωμένος, for, being *puffed up* through ignorance and error, he *destroys and annuls* τὸν ἱερὸν λόγον—THE HOLY WORD—which she collects, and arranges, and teaches to those who are initiated into her worship," &c.[1] What is this but a Pagan version of the Scripture truth, that "*the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty*[2];" and that "*he who taketh the word* out of the hearts of men, lest they should believe and be saved[3]," is THE DEVIL?

Plutarch, with the vanity so conspicuous in Grecian writers of referring the origin of every thing to their native country, says, that *Isis*, as well as Typhon, is a word of Greek derivation, from ἴσημι—scio. The error is too preposterous to require a serious refutation—suffice it to say, that the Greek *language*, *people*, *theology*, and *manners*, were, for the most part, derived from Egyptian colonies. The derivation of *Isis*, approved by Jablonski, is I-SI, *abundantia permanans*; from a notion that Isis was the personification of nature. This idea is suggested by the following inscription, copied by Plutarch

[1] De Isid. et Osirid. *in principio.*

[2] 2 Cor. xi. 3. [3] Luke viii. 12.

from a temple of Isis at Sais: "*I am all that hath been, and is, and shall be; and my veil no mortal hath ever removed.*"

But we may observe, that the Isis of Egypt is to be recognised in the Isi of Hindûstan[1]: the name of her consort is Isa. May not these two names have been originally derived from איש and אשה, *the names of Adam and Eve* in the second chapter of Genesis? The transposition of the words does not militate against the hypothesis—such permutations being allowed to mythology. These words are derived from the root ישה, signifying *abstract existence*[2]—an idea which is not repugnant to that of I-si, *abundantia permanans*. The transition of ideas from "the mother of the human race," to the mother of the terrestrial globe—from the "abundantia permanans" of the habitable world, to the "abundantia permanans" of the universe, is in accordance with the genius of mythology.

When we are informed, therefore, by Faber[3], and other learned men, that Osiris and Isis are the CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE, under the mystical character of husband and wife—"The

[1] Faber's Pagan Idol. i. 167. [2] Parkhurst.
[3] Pag. Idol. i. 165.

Great Creator being sometimes esteemed in mythology, the animating soul, and sometimes the husband of the universe; while the universe, on the other hand, is sometimes reckoned the *body* and sometimes the *wife* of the Intelligent Being,"—(one theory representing the union of spirit and matter, under the idea of soul and body; and the other under the notion of conjugal unity)—we are not deprived of the hypothesis that *Osiris and Isis were originally Adam and Eve.* On the contrary, we may conjecture that the *intimate union* of Adam and Eve, and *the mysterious creation of the latter from the former*, might have suggested the notion of the father and mother of the universe in mystical union and separation. It is but the substitution of the father and mother of *all things* for the father and mother of *all men.*

One of the epithets by which Isis was known in Egypt was *Muth*, which Plutarch (*rightly*, according to Jablonski,) interprets "*Mother.*" The word *Muth*, מות, in Hebrew, signifies *death*; and the coincidence is not a little remarkable, when we remember that it was Eve who introduced "death" into the world.

The Phœnicians taught that Muth was a

man; the son of Saturn and Rhea (or OPS, *the serpent.*) The words of Eusebius are these:— "He consecrates his son Muth, whom he had by Rhea; whom the Phœnicians called DEATH, or PLUTO[1]." DEATH, the offspring of THE SERPENT, is thus an epithet to designate the woman "by whom came death!" Can there be a closer affinity between truth and fable, or a more illustrative commentary of mythology upon Scripture? It is true, that for this illustration we have had recourse to Phœnician and Egyptian fable; but it should be remembered that Thoth, the author of Egyptian learning, was likewise the founder of Phœnician theology.

"*Muth,*" signifying in the Egyptian language "Mother," is probably the parent of our English word expressing the same idea: and if ever there was a period in the primitive language[2], in which the word *Muth* signified both *mother* and *death,* how elegant is the combination, and how expressive its simplicity! "Mother" is a sound which brings with it the remembrance of affectionate solicitude from the

[1] Euseb. Præp. Evang. i. 38.

[2] In the Coptic language, the words which express "*mother,*" and "*to die,*" approach very near each other.

cradle to the grave; but accustomed as we are to its connexion with the former, how little are we sensible of its relation to the latter! how little do we imagine that from her who gave us *life* we inherit *death*.

Having made the above observations, I do not pretend to be ignorant that Osiris and Isis were the names under which the personified deities of the sun and moon were worshipped in Egypt; for I do not consider that this admitted fact militates in any degree against my hypothesis. The sun was the great god of the heathen world, and the moon was considered as his *wife*. So that the sun and moon of Egyptian worship, were THE CREATOR *in the mystical character of husband and wife*, under which he was expressed by many symbols and names. The sun and the moon; the male and female serpent; Osiris and Isis;—are in turn employed to denote the Intelligent Being, the Maker of all things, in conjugal unity; and it does not follow, that because *two* of these terms happen sometimes to be united to express *two others*, which are expressive of a common object, that therefore they *lose* their original cha-

racter, which is thus momentarily merged. *Osiris* and *Isis*, then, do not forfeit their original representation of *Adam* and *Eve*, when combined to express the *sun* and *moon*, which, independently convey the same idea of the mystical Creator; any more than the male and female serpent, though typical of Osiris and Isis, *and* of the sun and moon, lose their original typification of *the serpent in paradise*, by being employed to represent the abstract Deity.

Osiris and Isis, then, are Adam and Eve; and, though in the fable which records their history, other patriarchal truths may be confounded, yet I think there can be no doubt of its involving likewise the events in paradise. I have brought forward a few points of singular coincidence, and learning and ingenuity may find more. For such is the nature of heathen mythology, that if, under the heap of fabulous rubbish, we can perceive the least sparkling of a gem of truth, we may confidently affirm that the gem is not accidental, but that the rubbish has been heaped upon it.

II. PYTHON.

A Grecian fable—noticed by Hyginus, Fab. 140, *Ovid, Strabo, Pausanias, and Lucan.*

" Python, Terræ filius, Draco ingens. Hic ante Apollinem, ex oraculo in monte Parnasso responsa dare solitus erat. *Huic ex Latonæ partu interitus erat fato futurus.* . . . . . Python ubi sensit Latonam ex Jove gravidam esse, *persequi cœpit ut eam interficeret.* . . . . . Latona *oleam tenens* parit Apollinem et Dianam. . . . . Apollo Pythonem sagittis interfecit.". . . . .*Hyginus, Fab.* 140.

In this fable we recognise some remarkable features corresponding with the Fall and Redemption of mankind: *the persecution of the woman by the serpent;* his *predicted* destruction by " the woman's seed;" *the olive branch of peace* held in the hand of the mother who gave birth to " the Prince of Peace;" and, what is not the least significant portion of the legend, *the heavenly extraction* of the promised Avenger, uniting the *divine* nature of the Father with the *human* nature of the mother.

In the history of Python, his *antiquity* is to

be observed. He was produced by the slime which was left upon the earth at the subsiding of the deluge [1]. This was an origin naturally enough attributed to him by the poets; for in heathen mythology the deluge was supposed to have been caused by the evil spirit, of whose dracontic form the legend of Python preserved the memorial. "Plutarch supposed that the serpent Python typified *destruction;* Adamantius conceived that he represented *a race of demons to whom dragons and serpents perform the part of ministering attendants.* Pierius teaches us, that by the serpent the ancients symbolized *destruction, misfortune,* and *terror;* and Diodorus Siculus asserts, that *a serpent twisted in spiral volumes was the hieroglyphic of evil* [2]. All these symbolizations of Python intimate his connexion with the evil spirit.

The whole story of Python and Apollo is surprisingly parallel with that of the serpent-tempter and his conqueror, CHRIST. "It was ordained," says Cleombrotus, (Plutarch *de defectu* Orac. cited by Gesner, p. 92,) "that he

[1] Ovid, Met. i. 438.

[2] Faber, Pag. Idol. i. 441, who cites Olaus Wormius *de aureo cornu.*

who would slay Python, must be, not merely banished from the temple ten years, but even *depart from the world; whence he should return* after nine revolutions of the great year, *expiated* and *purified:* wherefore he should obtain the name of Phœbus—i. e. *pure;* and obtain possession of the oracle at Delphi."

Here is intimated, in terms not very obscure, the *death* of "the woman's seed," who should "bruise the serpent's head;" his *perfect righteousness;* and his *second advent,* as the Lord of the universal temple.

2. The Dragon of the Hesperides.—*Hyginus, Fab.* 30.—*Apollodorus—Ovid Met. Hesiod, &c.*

That the events in paradise must have left a deep and indelible impression of their reality upon the minds of mankind, is apparent from the *number* and *mutual independence* of the fables into which they enter. The dragon which kept the garden of the Hesperides forms another legend allusive to the paradisiacal serpent; but it relates more particularly to the victory of the Redeemer. The garden of the Hesperides, and its forbidden fruit, have long been considered as the mythological memorials of the

garden and the fruit of Eden: the dragon, as the representative of the serpent-tempter; and Hercules, as the triumphant "woman's seed." But the perverseness of paganism, having, in this instance, converted the woman into a goddess, converted likewise the seducing serpent into a guardian minister. Still, however, there are traces sufficiently strong, of the affinity which the fable bears to the truth. The dragon, *the offspring of Typhon*[1], was slain by Hercules, the son of Jupiter and Alcmena; that is, by a hero *uniting in his person the divine and human natures.* Being a servant of Juno, the slain dragon was translated into a constellation of the northern hemisphere, where he appears, in astronomical mythology, between the greater and lesser bear. Hercules is depicted upon the sphere as *pressing the dragon's head with his left foot*—"Sinistro autem toto caput draconis opprimere conatur[2]"—while the mouth of the dragon is represented in the act of "*bruising his heel.*"

Another version of the fable is, that this dragon, in the war of the giants against the

[1] Hygin. Fab. 30.

[2] Hygin. Poet. Astron. 422.

gods was opposed to Minerva, who "hurled him, contorted as he was, to the skies, and fixed him to the axis of the heavens[1]."

It is obvious, that in these two versions of the legend, the two great events in the history of Satan—his destruction by the woman's seed, and his overthrow by the archangel—are described. A proof that this celestial dragon was a representation of the serpent Satan, may be seen in Job xxvi. 13, as illustrated by the Septuagint. Speaking of the omnipotence of God, the prophet says, "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens: his hand hath formed THE CROOKED SERPENT:" which expression is thus most remarkably paraphrased by the Septuagint. "By his hand he has slain THE APOSTATE SERPENT[2]."

There can be no doubt, therefore, but that the seventy-two translators of the Hebrew Scriptures identified the dragon of the fable with the evil spirit who "kept not his first estate."

That Hercules was a personification of the Messiah, has been shown by several writers: but I do not recollect to have seen it observed, that his history is most surprisingly interwoven

[1] Hygin. Poet. Astron. 362. [2] "Δράκοντα ἀποστάτην."

with stories of *serpents vanquished by his arm*, at different periods of his life. His first act in childhood was to strangle *two serpents* in the cradle. His second labour was the destruction of the Lernæan *Hydra*, and the clearing of the neighbourhood of Argos from *serpents*. And his consummating glory, the conquest of the *dragon* which guarded the golden fruit in the garden of the Hesperides. In his combat with Geryon, he slew a *dragon;* and in the wars of the giants against Jupiter, a monster, whose human body terminated in *serpent-legs*[1]: while, to denote his connexion with the mystic serpent, he bore upon his shield the Ophite hierogram of THE SERPENT AND CIRCLE[2].

All these coincidences can hardly have arisen from the unmeaning imagination of mythologists. The appearance of Satan in a dracontic form is clearly recognised in the fable of the dragon of the Hesperides; and his dialogue with the woman seems to be remembered in the traditionary property attributed to this dragon—ἐχρῆτο δὲ φωναῖς παντοίαις—so says Apollodorus[3]: —"*He used all kinds of voices;*"—of which, in

[1] Montfaucon, i. plate 64. [2] Stukeley, Abury, 69.

[3] Lib. ii. s. 2.

accordance with the genius of mythology, we may suppose that the human voice was one.

To the same events there is an allusion in Plato [1], who, discoursing of the primitive condition of mankind, informs us, that at that time "*they lived naked, in a state of happiness*, and had *an abundance of fruits*, which were produced *without the labour of agriculture*; and that *men and beasts could then converse together*. But these things," he says, "we must pass over *until there appear* SOME ONE *meet to interpret them to us*." Here is evidently a fragment of an original tradition of Adam in Paradise, in a state of happy innocence; and not an obscure recollection of the conversation of Eve with the serpent. For the philosopher confesses that the tradition *involves a mystery*; and intimates that there must come *some highly-gifted person into the world to elucidate it.*

It is not then too much to assume, that in this relic of tradition are involved and confused—*the state of man in paradise; his fall through the serpent*; and *his future and final redemption.*

3. The conversation of Eve with the serpent,

[1] Polit. fol. 272. *Edit. Steph.*

and the opening of her eyes in consequence, may be detected under the fables of "Melampus," and "Helenus and Cassandra;" who were all supposed to have had *an insight into futurity*, by means of *serpents*. Melampus having preserved two snakes from destruction, was one day asleep beneath an oak, when the reptiles crept up and licked his ears. When he awoke from sleep, he found himself able to understand the chirping of birds; and discovered, moreover, that he was *gifted with prophecy*.

Helenus and Cassandra were asleep in the temple of Apollo[1], when they acquired the power of prophecy—"the passages of their senses being cleansed by the tongues of serpents." The same, says the scholiast on Euripid, *Hecuba*, that "serpents approaching and licking their ears, made them so sharp of hearing, that they alone, of all men, could understand the counsels of the gods, and became very excellent prophets[2]." To these we may add the case of Plutus, mentioned by Aristophanes, p. 76. *Two serpents* licking the eyelids

[1] Homer, Iliad, H. Scholiast.

[2] Bochart. Hieroz. lib. i. fol. 21.

of this personage, who was *blind*, restored him to eyesight, and made his eyes "more than humanly acute[1]."

Those who *ate serpents' flesh* were also supposed to acquire the gift of understanding the languages of the brute creation—consult Philostratus de vitâ Apollonii, lib. iii. c. 3,—wherein he says, that the Paracœ, a people of India, are said to have "understood the thoughts and languages of animals, by eating the heart and liver of serpents." The same author (lib. i. c. 14) says the same thing of the Arabians.

4. The story of Ceres and Proserpine is evidently a corruption of the events in paradise. Proserpine is deceived by Jupiter in the form of *a dragon*, or *great serpent;* but the prurient imagination of the Greek mythologists gave a colour to the tale suited to their licentious superstition. Subsequently, Pluto, *the god of hell*, becomes enamoured of Proserpine, and *carries her off with him to Tartarus*. Her mother Ceres obtains permission to see her, and is carried thither in a car drawn by *serpents*. For "*Jupiter*," in the first instance, substitute "*Pluto*," and the story will be scarcely fabulous.

[1] Spanheim, 212.

The ruler of hell will then appear as first seducing the woman under the form of a *serpent*; and then carrying her away to hell. The fall of Eve, and the consequence of that fall—eternal death—might very easily be converted into such a fable. The connexion of the *serpent* with all that goes to Tartarus, is not a little remarkable. *Serpents* drew Ceres, and the bite of a *serpent* sent Eurydice to hell; while Mercury escorts every soul to the realms of Pluto, with the *serpentine* caduceus in his hand [1]. The transformation of heathen deities into *serpents*, for the purpose of deceiving women, is of constant occurrence in mythology, and alludes to the deception of Eve by A SPIRITUAL BEING, who assumed for that purpose the dracontic form.

5. Though mythology has preserved more memorials of the seduction of Eve than that of Adam; yet the fall of Adam is not without its witness in heathen fable. Such a witness is the story of the deception of SATURN by his wife OPS. Saturn was deceived by OPS, who gave

[1] Cerberus himself, the watch-dog of Tartarus, had a *dragon's* tail, and his skin was studded with *serpents' heads* [1].

[1] Apollod.

him a stone to eat instead of his children, as Adam was deceived by his wife, who induced him to eat the forbidden fruit. The character of Saturn involves many particulars, both of Adam and of Noah; so that in "the father of the golden age" we recognize at once the first and second father of mankind. This confusion of times and characters is frequent in mythology, for want of an authentic history of the period which intervened between the Fall and the Deluge. It is the natural result of tradition supplying the place of written documents, when the discriminating power of the true religion is withdrawn or rejected. In the fable before us, there is a singular confusion between *the woman* and *the serpent*, such as could not have occurred but by corrupting the truth: and on that account we may consider it as one of the most valuable records of heathen mythology. The name of the wife and deceiver of Saturn is Rhea, or *Ops* —that is, OPH, the SERPENT-GOD of antiquity. The *deception* is therefore remembered, and the *agents* in the transaction; but true religion having withdrawn her discriminating light, the truth is discerned only "as through a glass, darkly:" and in the dimness, the serpent being

confounded with the woman, invests her at once with his name and his power. Saturn is deceived by a *serpent-wife*. In the *name of the stone*, also, which was devoured by the deceived husband, is preserved a memorial of the real author of the Fall. This stone is called ABADIR, the signification of which may be "SERPENS-DOMINUS-SOL."

The ABADIR-stone was regarded as the symbol of the solar deity, whose most favourite emblem was THE SERPENT; and *as such* assumed a conical figure to represent a sun's ray. The historical facts are sufficiently confused to create an agreeable fable; and the fable retains sufficient marks of its origin to show that it is a corruption of historical facts.

III. AHRIMAN.

A Persian tradition, preserved in the Zendavesta, from which Faber derives the following account.

1. "After the world had been created in the course of *five* successive periods, man himself is said to have been formed during a *sixth*. The first of the human species was compounded of a man and a bull; and this mixed being was

the commencement of all generations. *For some time after his production was a season of great innocence and happiness;* and the man-bull himself resided in an elevated region which the deity had assigned to him. At last an EVIL ONE, denominated AHRIMAN, *corrupted the world.* After having dared *to visit heaven*, he descended to the earth, and *assumed the form of a serpent.* The man-bull was poisoned by his venom, and died in consequence of it. Meanwhile AHRIMAN threw the whole universe into confusion; for that enemy of good mingled himself with every thing, appeared everywhere, and sought to do mischief both above and below. His machinations produced a general corruption; and so deeply was the earth and every element tainted by his malignity, that the purifying ablution of a GENERAL DELUGE became necessary to wash out the inveterate stain of evil[1]."

In this legend we have, in fact, *but one fabulous circumstance*—the compound character of the first man: all the rest is a correct picture of the Fall, and of its consequence—*corruption through Satanic agency;* until the waters of the

[1] Faber, Hor. Mos. i. 72.

deluge checked the progress, but left untouched the seat, of evil, which could only be "washed white" in the blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

2. The "war in heaven" is also remembered in Persian mythology, and appears, as in the fables of all other Gentiles, in the celestial signs. "The Polar Dragon" they denominated, (according to Dr. Hyde,) AZACHA.—"The serpent who devours men and beasts[1]." The contention of the Archangel with Satan is probably shadowed out in the hierogram of the two serpents, representing the good and evil genius contending for the mundane egg, the symbol of the universe. The constellation *serpentarius*, to which Ahriman was exalted under the name of Azacha, is described in the hand of a human figure called Ophiuchus, which is the same as the Ophioneus of Syrian mythology, the rebel against the gods.

IV. THE ARABIAN TRADITION.

Respecting the seduction of our first parents, by the serpent, the Arabians have a tradition to

[1] Maurice, Hist. of Hind. i. 315.

the following effect:—That the devil, offering to get into Paradise to tempt Adam, was not admitted by the guard; whereupon he begged of all the animals, one after another, to carry him, that he might speak to Adam and his wife; but they all refused, except the serpent, who took him between two of his teeth, and so introduced him[1]."

Hence probably was borrowed the rabbinical conceit, that "when Sammael (*i. e.* the devil) wished to deceive Eve, he entered Paradise riding upon a serpent, who was at that time shaped something like a camel[2]."

V. CRISHNA.

A tradition of the Brahmins of Hindústan.

The two sculptures of CRISHNA *suffering*, and CRISHNA *triumphant*, of which beautiful engravings are given by Maurice[3], are evident records of the fall and redemption of man. In the former, the god (a beautiful youthful figure,) is represented enfolded by an

[1] Sale's Koran, ch. ii. *note*.

[2] Maimonides, More Nevoch. 281.

[3] Hist. Hind. vol. ii.

enormous SERPENT, *who bites his heel;* in the latter, the god is represented as *trampling upon the serpent's head.*

The story of Crishna is very similar to that of Hercules in Grecian mythology, the serpent forming a prominent feature in both. He conquers a *dragon*, into which the Assoor Aghe had transformed himself to swallow him up[1]. He defeats also Kalli Naga, *(the black or evil spirit with a thousand heads,)* who, placing himself in the bed of the river Jumna, poisoned the stream, so that *all the companions* of Crishna, and his *cattle*, who tasted of it, *perished.* He overcame Kalli Naga *without arms*, and *in the form of a child.* The serpent twisted himself about the body of Crishna, but the god tore off his heads, one after the other, and trampled them under his feet. Before he had completely destroyed Kalli Naga, the wife and children of the monster (serpents also,) came and besought him to release their relative. Crishna took pity on them, and, releasing Kalli Naga, said to him, "Begone quickly *into the abyss;* this place is not proper for thee.

[1] Maurice, Hist. Hind. ii. 272.

Since I have engaged with thee, thy name shall remain *through all the period of time*: and devatars and men shall henceforth *remember thee without dismay*." So the serpent, with his wife and children, went into the abyss, and *the water which had been infected by his poison became pure and wholesome*[1].

At another period of his history we discover Crishna destroying the dæmon Sanchanaga, *the serpent-king of Egypt*, and his army of *snakes*[2]. Crishna was *vulnerable only in the sole of his foot*[3]. Similarly the hero Achilles was vulnerable only in the *heel*. The idea was probably borrowed from the tradition of "the woman's seed," whose "heel should be bruised" by the serpent Satan.

In corroboration of this inference we may adduce No. CLIV. of the Etruscan Vases, described in the Canino catalogue, in the Archæologia, vol. xxiii. p. 140. Here is represented the abduction of Thetis by Peleus. The goddess is defended by a *serpent*. The connection, to say the least, is curious, and may have arisen from some garbled tradition of the *woman*, the *serpent*,

[1] Maurice, Hist. Hind. ii. 276.

[2] Ibid. ii. 89. 140. [3] Ibid. iii. 88.

and her human-divine son, who was only vulnerable in the *heel.*

The singular agreement of the history of CRISHNA with that of CHRIST, has driven sceptics to the conclusion, that the whole fable of the former was grafted upon Hindû mythology by the votaries of the latter, who first embraced Christianity in India. The only plausible ground for such a conclusion is the similarity of sound between "Crishna" and "Christ." But they, who argue upon this accidental resemblance, forget that the word "CHRIST" is purely *Greek*, and that the Apostles, being *Jews*, were not likely to talk of the Messiah by his Grecian appellation, in a country of Hindûs. It was much more likely that they would have preached JESUS, that word being one in their native language: and yet the word JESUS is not interwoven with Hindû mythology.

In the traditions of the wars of Crishna and Budh, the *eagle* of the former is represented as pursuing the *serpent* of the latter, to recover the *books of science and religion* with which he had fled[1]. The same serpent is also said to have

[1] Tod, Rajasthan i. 537.

carried off Ella the daughter of Ichswaca the son of Manu, and so provoked the hostility of Crishna.

The mythological connection of the Serpent with *knowledge* is remarkable. Col. Tod observes that "it is a singular fact that in every country THE SERPENT is the medium of communicating knowledge. The *Takshacs*, *Nagas*, or *Serpents*, introduced letters into India [1]."

VI. THE TEUTONIC FABLES.

In the Teutonic mythology the assumption of the serpentine form by the devil is poetically described by representing THE GREAT SERPENT as an emanation from the evil spirit LOKE.

In the rebellion of Loke against the universal father, the serpent being overcome was thrown down into the ocean, where he encompasses the whole earth with his folds.

The evil principle of the Scandinavians is called in the Edda—"THE CALUMNIATOR OF THE GODS; THE GRAND CONTRIVER OF DECEITS AND FRAUDS; THE REPROACH OF GODS AND MEN." "He is beautiful in figure, but his mind is evil,

[1] Asiatic Transactions, vol. ii. p. 563.

and his inclinations inconstant. Three monsters emanate from this evil being: the wolf Fenris, THE SERPENT Midgard, and HELA, or DEATH. All three are enemies to the gods, who, after various struggles, have chained the wolf till the last day, when he shall break loose and devour the sun. The serpent has been cast into the sea, where he shall remain *until he is conquered by the god* THOR: and *Hela shall be banished into the lower regions*[1]."

This intimate connexion, between the EVIL SPIRIT, THE SERPENT, and DEATH, immediately suggests the conclusion, that the whole legend is but the original patriarchal tradition fabulized.

"Thor was esteemed A MIDDLE DIVINITY—A MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. He is said to have *bruised the head of the great serpent* with his mace. It was further believed of him, that in his final engagement with the same serpent he would beat him to the earth and slay him; but that the victory would be obtained *at the expense of his own life*, for that he himself would be suffocated by the floods of poison

[1] Mallet, Northern Antiq. i. 100. *Bishop Percy's translation.*

vomited out of the mouth of the noxious reptile [1]."

The superstition of "the serpent in the sea" was known to the Chinese, as we observed in the chapter on the Serpent-worship of China. But it was, doubtless, at one time, a very general superstition among the heathen, for we find it mentioned by Isaiah, chap. xxvii. 1—"In that day the Lord, with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish Leviathan, the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that CROOKED SERPENT: and he shall slay THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA [2]."

The prophet here represents, as I conceive, the triumph of the Messiah over Satan, who is pre-eminently THE SERPENT; and who, through

[1] Faber Pag. Idol. i. 442, citing the Edda; and Hor. Mos. i. 77.

[2] The translation of Bishop Lowth is somewhat different; but the variation is immaterial.

"In that day shall Jehovah punish with his sword,
His well-tempered, and great, and strong sword,
Leviathan the rigid serpent,
And Leviathan the winding serpent:
And shall slay the *monster* that is in the sea."

The word here rendered "*monster*" is תנין, which may mean a whale, or *a sea serpent*. I follow the Septuagint.

the blindness of idolatry, had been elevated into a constellation; or, through the influence of tradition corruptly remembered, had been clothed with the attributes of the author of the deluge. The Eastern nations, more particularly, adored him under the former; the Northern under the latter character. The prophecy of Isaiah may denote the triumph of the Messiah over *both*, in the conversion of these people to the knowledge of his gospel.

It is worthy of observation, that in Scandinavia the serpent rarely (I believe *never*) arrives at such a size as to become a formidable enemy to an unarmed man. Why then, should he be represented as symbolical of the great enemy of God and man? In the absence of every other reasonable hypothesis to account for this phenomenon, we must attribute the connexion of the Teutonic serpent with the evil spirit, and the notion of his natural hostility to the human race to the original tradition, preserved and handed down by the patriarchs after the flood, and conveyed by their descendants to the remotest corner of the globe.

VII.

Hence the superstition in MEXICO and PERU, where the serpent was adored with the most revolting worship, and where even the memory of the fall of man by the instrumentality of the serpent was preserved.

Baron Humboldt, in his "*Researches concerning the Antiquities of America*," gives an engraving of a very interesting hieroglyphic painting of the Aztecks (the original possessors of Mexico) which is preserved in the Vatican; and which, if genuine, is decisive of the long disputed question, "whether or not the Mexicans retained any tradition of the fall of man."

In this painting is described a female in conversation with a serpent who is erect. This female, we are assured, is called, by the Mexicans, "*woman of our flesh*," and is considered as "THE MOTHER OF THE HUMAN RACE." She is always represented with a great serpent[1]. "The serpent represented in the company of 'the mother of men' is the GENIUS OF EVIL; and is also described as 'crushed,' and some-

[1] Humboldt, Res. vol. i. p. 195.

times cut to pieces, by the great spirit Teotl[1]."

In two of the paintings, preserved by M. Aglio[2], is seen a figure *destroying a great serpent* by smiting him *on the head* with a sword. In one of these pictures the figure is *human*, in the other a GOD.

A similar, but still more expressive, painting occurs in plate 74 of the Borgian Collection[3], in which we distinguish a deity in human form contending with a dragon. The god is victorious, and in the act of thrusting a sword into *the dragon's head*, while, singular to relate, the dragon has *bitten off his foot at the heel!*

The serpent, or dragon, are also, frequently seen, either as symbolical of the months, or of the signs of the zodiac. In one corner of two of these paintings, in vol. ii. is a dragon *swallowing a man*. There are also representations of *gods encircled in the folds of a serpent*; and, indeed, so many, and so various are these dracontic emblems, that the most casual observer would discover, at a glance, that *serpents* and *dragons* were grand symbols of the Mexican gods, and

[1] Humboldt, Res. vol. i. p. 228. [2] Mex. Ant. vol. iii.
[3] Mex. Ant. vol. iii.

in some mysterious manner connected with the history of man.

Respecting the origin of these hieroglyphic pictures there has been some discussion in the literary world, and many men of eminence have expressed their conviction that they were mostly painted *after* the arrival of the Spaniards in the country, and were intended to be descriptive of the religion which the Christians taught rather than of that which the Mexicans already held. Regarding the question *theoretically*, there seems to be some ground for the conclusion: but the recent exhibition of Mr. Bullock's collection of Mexican antiquities has *practically* settled the dispute. The stupendous idol of THE SERPENT DEVOURING A FEMALE, could not have been sculptured after the overthrow of the empire by Cortez; but is probably one of the idols which Bernal Dias del Castillo observed in the great temple. This agreement of sculpture and painting, among an unlettered people, may be deemed a testimony equivalent to written history.

There is, however, written history to show that "the Peruvians worshipped snakes, and kept them PICTURED in their houses and

temples[1]." It is probable, therefore, that the Mexicans did the same. Besides, we are informed by Robertson[2], that Zummaragua, the *first* bishop of Mexico, destroyed every Mexican painting he could discover, because he regarded them as fuel to keep alive the superstitions of the people. It is not very probable, therefore, that any future Spanish priests would be permitted to deck out Christian doctrines in the garb of the ancient idolatry. Until proof can be adduced that such a practice prevailed, we are authorized to believe that the traditions of the old world were not forgotten in the new.

The spiritual destruction of the woman by the serpent in Paradise is the great truth preserved in the memorial of the *sculpture;* while her previous conversation with him is depicted in the *painting*. The "*crushing*" of the serpent by Teotl is the victory of "the woman's seed;" and the blood of HUMAN VICTIMS, shed before the dracontic and serpentine idols in the great temple, is commemorative of "THE BLOOD"

[1] Purchas, Pilgrims, pt. iv. p. 1478.

[2] America, vol. iii. p. 5.

which "overcame[1] the serpent," and redeemed mankind.

The conversation of Eve with the serpent seems to have made more impression upon the memory of man than almost any other event in primeval history: as from the singularity of the circumstance we might expect. It is remembered in the mythologies of Egypt, Greece, Syria, Hindûstan, Northern Europe, and North and South America. And it is one of the very few rays of truth discoverable in the darkness of the NEW ZEALANDER'S mind; for "these people have a tradition, that THE SERPENT ONCE SPOKE WITH A HUMAN VOICE[2]!"

[1] "*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.*"—Rev. xii. 11.

[2] Faber, Pag. Idol. i. 274, citing Marsden in the Chr. Obs. Nov. 1810, p. 724.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER VI.

SERPENT-TEMPLES.

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SERPENT TEMPLES.

I. The intimate connexion between the solar and serpent worship has already been ascertained. From which it appears, that, in the confusion of Pagan idolatry, these superstitions, originally independent, became so closely interwoven, that from their union sprung up a new kind of idolatry, and a new god, who, partaking of the attributes of the sun and of the serpent, united their *names*, and was worshipped as Apollo[1]. The union of the two religions is, not obscurely, intimated in the legend of Apollo Pythius; in which this deity is represented as taking possession of a temple which

[1] Ἀπόλλων may be decomposed into Ap, or Ab, *serpens*; El, *deus*; and On, *sol*: so that *serpens-deus-sol* is the name of the deity, whose other title, Phœbus, *(Phi-oub)* denotes the *oracular* serpent.

had been originally dedicated to the serpent alone.

The same god, Apollo, was sometimes called OPHEL, which is nearly the same name, dropping only the syllable ON, which signifies the *sun;* for by this time the word EL had arrived at the same signification. EL means *god*, from the Hebrew אל; and when the sun came to be deified, he was naturally called EL, whence the Greeks obtained the word Ἥλιος, to denote "*the sun.*"

APOLLO, then, being the SERPENT-SOLAR DEITY, *his* temples will be those in which we must look for the temples of THE SERPENT; for though in a few instances we may find the serpent adored alone, yet in no place shall we find a serpent-temple, in which the rites of the sun were not also partially celebrated.

1. Upon the introduction of images to express objects of worship, the solar deity was not unfrequently represented by *conical stones* in an upright position. These were called by the Greeks βαιτύλια—derived probably from the Hebrew, בית־אל, "*the house,*" or "*dwelling-place of God.*" The earliest mention of such a stone occurs in Gen. xxviii. where Jacob erects one

as a pillar, in remembrance of his celebrated dream, and, consecrating it to God, calls the name of the place *Bethel*. In process of time the stone itself was called *Bethel*, and similar pillars were hence named βαιτύλια, and supposed to be animated with the presence of the deity [1]. The Ophites called them *Abadir* [2], from the name of the serpent-solar god: and they were *conical*, as representing *a ray of the sun*.

These conical pillars gave the first notion of an obelisk, which is a similar monument on a larger scale. The word *obelisk*, according to Bryant, is derived from OBEL, the name of the god to whom they were dedicated. This was hellenized into ὀβελίσκος. OBEL was the Apollo of Syria; and, probably, HELIOGABALUS was the same deity; for this god was represented by a black stone of conical form, which was

[1] See Bochart. Geog. Sacr. l. i. p. 38; also Maurice, Ind. Antiq. ii. 347. Sanchoniathon in his Cosmogony has the following passage: "Moreover they say that the god Ouranus invented the Baitulia, having made stones which were *animated*." It is possible that the *rocking stones* of the Druids may have been erected to perpetuate the same superstition.

[2] Bryant, Anal. i. 60, and ii. 201.

said to have dropped from heaven, and was revered as an image of the sun, at Emesa.

In the Caaba of Mecca there is also a black stone, said to have fallen from heaven. The Mahometans generally hold it in great veneration[1]. This was, probably, of the same kind as the Heliogabalus of Emesa—a probability which is strengthened by the name of the temple—*Caaba:* for this word may be a corruption of *Ca-ab-ir*, which means "*the temple of* ABIR," *the solar serpent*[2].

PYRAMIDS were obelisks of the most magnificent order; but it is supposed by Bryant that the obelisk originally represented the *deity*, of whom the pyramid, in times of improved architecture, was *the temple*[3]. As the obelisk was an improvement upon the original Baitulia, it preserved the pointed form of these sacred stones in its apex—every obelisk terminating in a small pyramidal figure, which, like the Baitulia, was intended to be the representation of *a*

[1] Sale's Prelim. Disc. to the Koran, p. 156.

[2] See Ch. iii. s. 2, "Ophiolatreia in Samothrace."

[3] Pyramids were however, frequently used as sepulchres. The Mexican temples which were pyramidal, united both the templar and sepulchral character.

sun's ray. The word *pyramid* itself means "*a ray of the sun*[1]," from the Coptic *Pi-ra-mu-e.*

2. AN AGGREGATE of BAITULIA formed the first temples which were erected: and these temples were generally built *in the figures of the hierograms of their respective gods.* Thus the worshippers of the sun arranged their Baitulia in a *circle,* to represent the *sun's disk.* Many such temples are scattered through Europe, especially in Britain. Stonehenge is of this description; but from the transverse stones which rest upon the columns, and the evident signs of art and the chisel, this temple seems to be of a much more recent date than any other Druidical structure now extant. It is observable however that even in Stonehenge the upright columns are somewhat of the pyramidal figure—thus preserving the memory of their original consecration to the sun.

As the worshippers of the sun collected their Baitulia into *circular,* so the votaries of THE SERPENT formed theirs into a serpentine figure. Examples of this structure may be seen in several parts of England, but more especially at Carnac in Britany; which is the most extensive and most remarkable relic of the Celtic religion in

[1] Jablonski Panth. Ægyp. Prolegom. 82.

the world. Of this kind also was the Ophite temple described in Ovid, as passed by Medea in her flight from Attica to Colchis—

FACTAQUE DE SAXO LONGI SIMULACHRA DRACONIS.

That the ancient Ophite temples were built of single and separate stones arranged after the manner of the avenues of Carnac is probable from the devices which appear on Tyrian coins, where a serpent is seen between two upright unhewn columns.

3. In process of time, however, the simple serpentine avenues underwent a great and elegant change. Instead of the solitary snake, moving in graceful sinuosities over hill and dale, or lying dormant in an uniform straight line, the serpent was made to wind his majestic form *through the centre of a circle or globe.* The sinuosities were still characteristically preserved, and the circular area as well as the serpentine avenues was still formed of the sacred Baitulia. The temple of Abury in Wiltshire was a beautiful specimen of this order of Ophite sanctuaries. This description of temple may, I conceive, have arisen from the union of the Solar and Ophite religions, after the suppression of the latter by

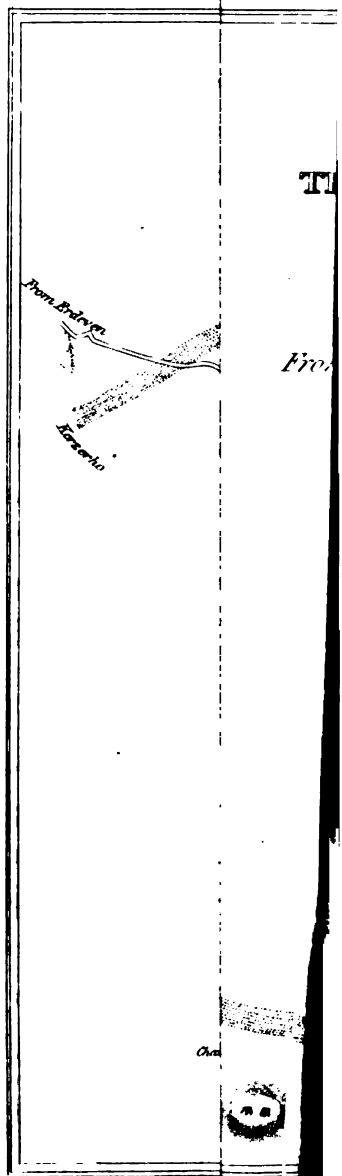
the votaries of the former. The constant wars of the sun and serpent, and the general overthrow of the Ophite worship, have been alluded to in the course of this volume: but in the next chapter I shall enter into a more minute account. From the details it will appear that the worshippers of the Sun, being victorious, every where took possession of the Ophite temples. It is probable that in so doing, they did not at once destroy them: but building their own circular temples in the centre, formed the original serpent into *avenues* and *approaches* to the Sanctuary of the SUN. This compound temple was called a DRACONTIUM: from which is derived the *name* and the *idea* of a DRAGON, which is a fabulous monster frequently mentioned but little understood by the poets who employed it to decorate a tale of wonder. "DRACONTIUM" has been ingeniously imagined by my friend the Rev. George Andrews, to be a derivation from דֶּרֶךְ אוֹן (*Derech On*)—"*an avenue of On:*" ON being the title of the SUN in Egypt and Phœnicia. This derivation is the most expressive that can be assigned, and accounts at once for the origin of the fabulous *dragon*, which is said to have been *a large serpent peculiar to*

temples. Thus Servius in his Commentary on Virgil, defining the different kinds of serpents, says, "Angues aquarum, serpentes terrarum, DRACONES *templorum* sunt:"—not that Servius understood the word "Draco" in the sense above given, but that he recorded the language of *tradition*, and *tradition* preserved the memory of the *fact*. The word "Dracontium" as significant of a solar Ophite temple, would be readily adopted even by the Ophites themselves. For while the sun-worshippers understood by it "an avenue of the Sun," the serpent-worshippers would merge the circle in the avenues, and call the whole a DRAGON—A LARGE SERPENT. Hence the origin and the superstition of the DRAGON.

The DRACONTIA of the Solar-Ophites were of various forms, embracing every figure of the Ophite hierogram[1]. Some were straight—others were formed by *one* serpent passing through the circle; and others again consisted of a circle and *two* issuing serpents.

The temples of *Merivale* on Dartmoor; *Abury* in Wiltshire; and *Stanton Drew* in Somerset-

[1] See plate 1.


From Erdeven
Karzerho

ure, respectively illustrate the above figures. hese I shall describe in their order. But first may be proper to consider the more simple, fore we describe the complex dracontium. I ill therefore begin with the temple of

CARNAC.

1. The dracontium of Carnac is one of the ost interesting remains of the Celtic religion. t is situated half a mile from the village of that ame, in the department of the Morbihan in Britany; nine miles from the beautifully situated own of Auray, and approaches to within a mile f the Bay of Quiberon.

I visited this temple in the summer of 1831, and again in the spring of 1832. In my first visit I was accompanied by General de Penhouët, an antiquary highly esteemed in his native Britany, who had inquired deeply into the nature and figure of the temple. He pronounced it to be a Dracontium:—an opinion which has been confirmed by my subsequent survey of it made in company with Mr. Murray Vicars, a landsurveyor of Exeter; by whose exertions I have been furnished with a beautiful

and accurate plan of the whole temple upon the scale of nine inches to a mile.

The temple known as "The Stones of Carnac," begins at the village of Erdeven, passes midway by Carnac, and terminates at a narrow part of the marine lake of La Trinitè. The whole length of the temple, following its sinuosities, is *eight miles*. The average width from Erdeven to Lemaenac, is 200 feet; and from Lemaenac to the end, 350 feet. The highest stones are at Kerzerho, Lemaenac, Kermario, and Kerlescant; at which points they average from 15 to 17 feet high, and from 30 to 40 feet in circumference. The vacant spaces, noticed below, have been cleared to build the adjacent villages of Plouharnel and Carnac, and the numerous walls which intersect the country:—

From *a* to *b* the stones have been removed; from *b* to *c* they reappear.

From *c* to *d* there is a vacancy; from *d* to *e* a recovery.

From *e* to *f* no stones are visible; from *f* to *g* a few.

From *g* to *h* is a dreary waste; at *h* there may have been an area similar to Lemaenac; from *h* to *k* is a continuation of stones.

From *k* to *l* is another vacancy; at *l*, *m*, *n*, *o*, are a few stones; the intermediate spaces void.

From Lemaenac to *p* is a beautiful continuation.

From *p* to *q* are only a few scattered stones.

From *q* to *r* the parallelitha are preserved; from *r* to *s* broken.

From Kerlescant to the end the Dracontium is perfect [1].

The labour of its erection may be imagined from the fact, that it originally consisted of *eleven rows of stones*, about *ten thousand* in number, of which, *more than three hundred averaged from fifteen to seventeen feet in height, and from sixteen to twenty or thirty feet in girth: —one stone even measuring forty-two feet in circumference.*

From the accompanying plate it will be seen that the course of the avenues is *sinuous*, describing the figure of an enormous serpent moving over the ground. But this resemblance is more striking upon an actual inspection of the original. Then the *alternations* of the *high*

[1] For a more detailed description, see Archæol. vol. xxv.

and *low* stones, regularly disposed, mark with sufficient accuracy *the swelling of the serpent's muscles as he moves along:* and a spectator standing upon one of the Cromlech hills, round which the serpent sweeps, cannot but be struck by the evidence of *design* which appears in the construction of the avenues.

In the course of the Dracontium there are two regularly defined areas; one, near the village of Carnac, which is of the shape of a *horse shoe*, or a *bell;* the other towards the eastern extremity, which approaches the figure of a rude circle, being a parallelogram with rounded corners. There are appearances also, but too ill-defined to be noticed, of other areas of a similar description.

The *circle* and the *horse shoe* were both sacred figures in the Druidical religion, as may be seen in Stonehenge where they are united; the outer circles inclosing inner horse shoes. I cannot find any connection between the latter symbol and the tenets of the Celtic religion, unless it be intended as a representation of the moon. The torques (of which a splendid collection, twelve in number, and £1000 sterling in value in pure

gold, was found in Britany in 1832,) were of the lunar form. And, perhaps, from this symbol (whatever it may have expressed) was derived the superstition so prevalent in Britain, of nailing a horse shoe over a door to scare away evil spirits, in the same manner as the sign of the cross is supposed to be efficacious by superstitious Roman Catholics. The worshippers of Carnac may, on this supposition, have been lunar Ophites; but this is mere conjecture.

It is curious, however, that at Erdeven, where the temple commences, an annual dance, describing the Ophite hierogram of the *circle and serpent*, is still kept up by the peasants at the Carnival. But the only tradition which I could find respecting the stones, was the universal superstition that *they once possessed life*, and were petrified as they stand. Some of the peasants believe that they were the Roman army who pursued the centurion Cornelius on account of his conversion to Christianity; and were petrified through his prayers. Others imagine that certain supernatural dwarfs erected them in one night, and *still inhabit*, each the stone which he erected. Both these opinions have their remote origin

in the *animated Baitulia;* and are paralleled by similar traditions in England, &c. respecting the Solar and Ophite temples.

Near that part of the dracontium which approaches Carnac is a singular mound of great elevation, which was once evidently conical—the upper portion of it being artificial. It is analogous to the remarkable hill of Silbury, which is similarly connected with the dracontium of Abury. These mounds were probably raised for the purpose of altars, upon which the perpetual fire kindled by the sun, was kept burning, in conformity with the rites of the Solar religion. They are very common in Persia, and may be alluded to in Scripture under the name of "the high places," upon which idolatry performed her rites. The conical mound near Carnac, which is so situated as to be seen for many miles, and from every part of the temple, has been consecrated by the Christians to the Archangel Michael: to whom also is sacred almost every natural or artificial cone in Britany. The reason of this dedication may be readily assigned. St. Michael is the destroyer of the spiritual dragon of the Apocalypse; whose

mutilated image lies prostrate below the mound, and whose worshippers were converted to the faith of the triumphant religion, which, in token of its victory, erected upon the solar mount a chapel dedicated to the destroyer of "the apostate serpent." By this consecration then is indicated the triumph of Christianity over Ophiolatreia: and it is but consistent that the people who allegorized the conversion of the Ophites by the metaphor of a victory over *serpents* should, in token of this victory, erect upon the high places of idolatry, chapels to the Archangel, the enemy and the victor of the SERPENT-TEMPTER.

This mound may possibly have given name to the adjacent village which may be called Carn-ac, from "*Cairn*," a hill, and "*hac*," a snake. The "serpent's hill" would be an appropriate title for Mont St. Michel. In the same manner the collection of columns called *Lemaenac*, may have been named from *maen*, "stones," and "*hac*," a snake.

In illustration of the dracontium of Carnac may be adduced a small but interesting Ophite temple in the Ile aux Moines, in the Morbihan. The only part of this temple now

perfect is the lunar or campanular area, corresponding to that in the dracontium of Carnac, which seems to have occupied the centre of the sanctuary. Some few of the stones which composed the avenues are standing, but very scattered. Many have been removed within the last twenty years to build walls and houses. At the southern extremity of the avenues the dracontium terminated in an oblong tumulus of considerable dimensions: one end of which being opened, has exposed to view a very beautiful Kistvaen. There was also an obelisk at the head of the tumulus. But the most remarkable circumstance attending this tumulus is its name—it is called *Pen-Ab*—that is, "the head of AB," the sacred serpent! Now, although this coincidence, without the knowledge of the temple's course, would prove little or nothing; yet combined with the fact, that parallel and sinuous avenues have once existed, running from Penab towards the middle of the island, and calling to mind the general custom of the ancient world which involved the name of the deity in that of the temple—we may fairly infer that this temple of the Ile aux Moines was a dracontium sacred to the Ophite deity AB.

J. Heath sc. 342 Strand.

London Published by J. G. & F. Rivington, St. Paul's Church Yard & Waterloo Place. 1833

The name of the island itself—"the *Isle of the Monks*," records probably some early establishment of Druids, the recollection of whom has been thus preserved.

There are, I believe, other dracontia in Britany and Gaul; but not having examined them personally, I pass on to those in our own country, which bear the most evident marks of their Ophite dedication.

2. The most remarkable dracontium in England is that of ABURY in Wiltshire, about five miles west of Marlborough, on the Bath road; over which thousands of travellers pass without dreaming that the ground upon which they tread was once esteemed the most holy in Britain. Of the temple of Abury an invaluable account has been left by the learned and ingenious Dr. Stukeley, in a volume replete with deep research and interesting facts. Having perused this volume with the attention which it demands, the reader should next have recourse to the splendid work of Sir Richard Colt Hoare on "*the History of Ancient Wiltshire*," in which he will discover ABURY AS IT IS, in the ruins of its magnificence. The theory of Stukeley is here sanctioned by an indisputable authority,

and his errors corrected with a judicious hand.

The temple of Abury may be thus succinctly described :—From a circle of upright stones, (without imposts,) erected at equal distances, proceeded two avenues in a wavy course, in opposite directions. These were the *fore* and *hinder* parts of the serpent's body, and they emerged from the lower segment of the circle, through which the serpent appeared to be passing from west to east. Within this great circle were four others, considerably smaller, two and two, described about *two* centres, but neither of them coincident with the centre of the great circle. They lay in the line drawn from the north-west to the south-east points, passing through the centre of the great circle. The great outer circle surrounded the chief part of the village of Abury or Avebury ; and was itself encompassed by a mound and moat. The *head* of the serpent was formed of two concentric ovals, and rested on an eminence called Overton Hill. This part of the temple, as long as it stood, was traditionally named in the neighbourhood, *the sanctuary*. It was destroyed [1] in

[1] The following extract from Pepys's Diary, proves that the

the seventeenth century, through the rapacity of the farmers, who converted the stones into materials for building, and repairing the roads. Overton Hill, upon which the head of the serpent rested, is the southern promontory of the

sanctuary was perfect in 1688. "In the afternoon came to Abury, where *seeing great stones* like those of Stonehenge standing up, I stopped, and took a countryman of that town, and he carried me and showed me a place trenched in like Old Sarum almost, with great stones pitched in it, some bigger than those at Stonehenge in figure, to my great admiration: and he told me that most people of learning coming by do come and view them, and that the king (Charles II.) did so: . . . . . I gave this man one shilling. So took coach again, *seeing one place with great high stones pitched round*, which I believe was once a particular building in some measure *like that of Stonehenge*. But *about a mile* off, it was prodigious to see how full the downes are of great stones; and all along the valley stones of considerable bigness, most of them growing certainly out of the ground: which makes me think the less of the wonder of Stonehenge, for hence they might undoubtedly supply themselves with stones as well as those of Abury." Vol. iv. p. 131.

To a person acquainted with the localities of Abury, Kennet, and the Grey Wethers, it is needless to remark, that the "*place with great high stones pitched round—like that of Stonehenge*," which the traveller saw *very soon after* getting into his carriage, and about a mile before he reached "the stones in the valley," was the *sanctuary* upon Overton hill.

Hakpen hills; and Dr. Stukeley supposes, that from the *serpent's head* the range was so named; for *Hakpen* is a compound word, which, in the British language, bore that signification—*Hak*, a snake; and *Pen*, the head. This conjecture he illustrates by the pertinent remark, that "to this day, in Yorkshire, the peasants call snakes, *hags* and *hagworms*[1]."

The tail of the serpent terminated in a valley towards Beckhampton; and the whole figure was so contrived, as to have the appearance of a vast snake creeping over hill and dale. From the circle to the head, the avenue consisted of one hundred stones on each side. The head was composed of a double oval, the outer containing forty, and the inner eighteen, stones. The tail consisted likewise of one hundred stones on each side, and was, as well as the avenue to the head, *a mile in length*. The area enclosed by the circular rampart, which surrounds the great circle, is twenty-eight acres, seventeen perches, as measured by Sir R. C. Hoare.

Midway between the extremities of the two serpentine avenues, where a horizontal line, con-

[1] Stukeley, Abury, 32.

necting them, would meet a perpendicular let fall from the centre of the great circle, is a remarkable, artificial, *conical mound*, called SILBURY HILL, of very great elevation. This is supposed, by Stukeley, to be a sepulchral monument; but Sir R. C. Hoare, with more probability, considers it to be a part of the temple. It is, doubtless, a mound dedicated to the solar deity, like the pyramids of ancient Greece and Egypt; and corresponds with the OPHELTIN of classical mythology, and the Mont St. Michel of Carnac. In connexion with the serpent-temple, it identifies the whole structure as sacred to the deity known by the Greeks as APOLLO. Its very name imports "the hill of the sun."

A more stupendous monument of heathen idolatry, than Abury, is not to be found in England. Many of the stones were remaining in their positions, when Stukeley surveyed the temple in 1723; but a great number were destroyed by the farmers in his time, and many more have been broken up, and carried away since. The work of devastation, it is to be feared, is not yet finished; such is the ignorance and barbarism of cupidity.

There are now remaining, of the serpentine figure, only *eleven* stones of the avenue between Abury and Kennet: that is, of the avenue which passing through West Kennet terminated in the serpent's head on Overton Hill. Marks in the ground contiguous to *eight* of these *eleven* stones, show the original position of *four others*, which have been taken away. So that from the turnpike gate at Avebury, to that point of the Bath road which passes through Kennet, the avenue may be traced without much difficulty. *One* very large stone stands near the entrance of the circle; and between *two* others the road passes as it approaches Kennet; the remaining *eight*, and the *four* vacant loci, are found together in a field on the right. The large stone by the circle, and the two which are nearest to the Bath road, are accurate guides to the eye in tracing the whole avenue.

Besides these, I observed (Sept. 3, 1829), *four* subverted stones in the descent and bottom of the hill beyond Kennet, to the south of the Bath road, at the point where the neck of the serpent is supposed to have risen on Overton Hill. These are, evidently, the remains of the

avenue from Kennet to "the sanctuary." Of "the sanctuary" itself, not a single stone remains.

Of the Beckhampton avenue, only two stones retain their original position; and these are in the middle of the avenue[1]. I had not time to look for the *loci* of the others; and I therefore refer the reader to the elaborate descriptions of Dr. Stukeley and Sir R. C. Hoare, with them lamenting, that in a country like this such barbarism should have been permitted as would disgrace the most uncivilized of the hordes of Tartary—destroying piecemeal, for the sake of a few tons of stone or a few yards of barren ground, one of the most interesting and venerable monuments of antiquity in the world.

Some of these stones, however, resisted the utmost efforts of the destroyers, who, unable to break, sunk them in the ground by digging pits about them. Two of these stones lie six feet under ground in the premises of Mr. Butler, the landlord of the Kennet Inn, and over another the Bath road passes.

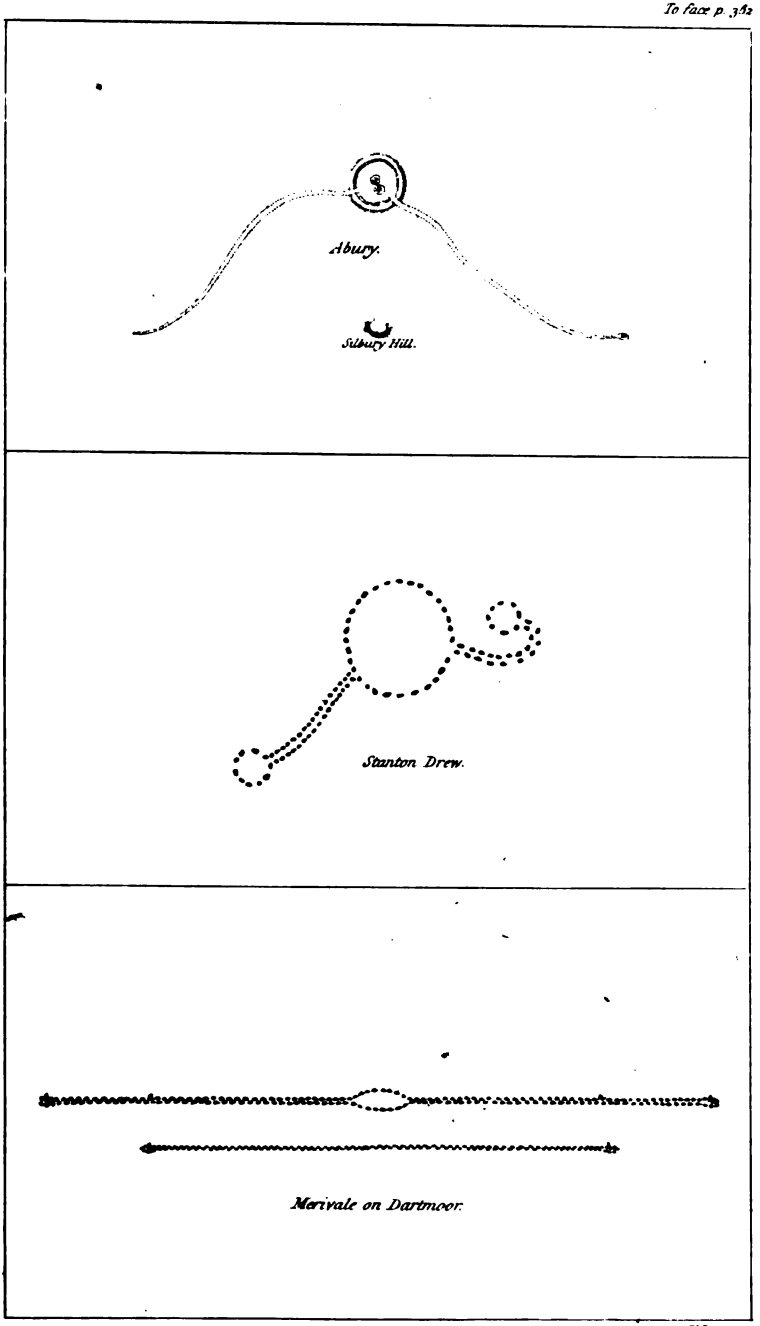
In the time of Dr. Stukeley, the peasants of

[1] Sir. R. C. Hoare, Ancient North Wilts, p. 78.

the neighbourhood had a tradition that "*no snakes could live* within the circle of Abury." This notion may have descended from the times of the Druids, through a very natural superstition that the unhallowed reptile was divinely restrained from entering the sanctuary, through which the mystic serpent passed.

There have been found at Abury the usual Druidical relics of Celts, Angnina, &c.: and a proof that this was once a temple of very great resort, is afforded by the immense quantities of burnt bones, horns of oxen, and charcoal which have been discovered in the agger of the vallum. These are indications of great sacrifices. Dr. Stukeley was doubtful of the derivation of the word ABURY; but I think that a probable solution may be found in the compound title אוב־אור *serpens solis*, for here are all the data required. The temple was the Ophite hierogram; the officiating priests were Druids, whose religion recognised the sun as a deity, and the serpent as a sacred emblem; the name of that mystic serpent was *Aub*, and a title of the solar deity, *Aur* or *Ur*: the whole temple represented the union of the serpentine with the circular sanctuaries, that is, of the temples of the Ophite and

To face p. 382



J. Basire sc.

British Dracontia

London. Published by J. G. & F. Rivington, St. Pauls Church Yard & Waterloo Place 1833.

Solar superstition. What name then could be more expressive than AUBUR, or ABUR, "*the serpent of the sun?*" The present name of the village is Avebury, which the first describer of the temple (Mr. Aubrey, who lived in the seventeenth century) says, should have been written *Aubury;* and this reading he found in the legier-book of Malmesbury Abbey [1].

3. STANTON DREW. The second British dracontium in order of beauty, is that of Stanton Drew, in Somersetshire. It is situated near the village of Pensford, about five miles west of Bristol.

This temple, which is much dilapidated, originally consisted of one large circle connected by avenues with two smaller; and thus described the second order of the Ophite hierogram—the circle and *two* serpents. In Egyptian hieroglyphics, when two serpents are seen in connection, one typifies the Good and the other the Evil Principle. For the first knowledge of this temple as a *dracontium*, we are indebted to Sir Richard Colt Hoare. I

[1] See Mr. Aubrey's interesting account in Sir R. C. Hoare's "Ancient Wiltshire."

visited it in 1831, and made the following observations.

The great circle is at present contained by only thirteen stones, and these are generally small, and much worn by the weather. It is probable that the original number was thirty. The dimensions of this circle or rather oval, are 126 yards by 115.

A small circle of eight stones, 32 feet in diameter, was connected with its eastern limb by an avenue of, perhaps, twenty stones. The length of this avenue is about 100 yards, and it is remarkable for its very great curvature, returning at a sharp angle towards the large circle, as if to represent a snake throwing back his head. Only ten stones of this avenue remain. The western circle is at the distance of 150 yards; and consisted of ten or twelve stones. Its diameter is forty-three yards, but I could trace no avenue between it and the oval. The ground is much broken in this part. A wall intersects it, and a road to a farm-yard passes through it. So that the removal of the stones may be accounted for without difficulty. I have no doubt whatever that an avenue connecting this smaller circle with the great one, once existed—

for analogy is in favour of the hypothesis, although no traces of the avenue remain.

I am confirmed in my opinion by a tradition of the neighbourhood, which almost universally accompanies Ophite temples. By this it appears that Keyna, the daughter of a Welsh prince, who lived in the fifth century, having left her country and crossed the Severn for the purpose of finding some secluded spot, where she might devote herself, without interruption, to religious contemplations, arrived in the neighbourhood of Stanton Drew. She requested permission from the prince of the country, to fix her residence at Keynsham, which was then an uncleared wood. The prince replied, that he would readily give the permission required; but it was impossible for any one to live in that place on account of *the serpents*, of the most venomous species, which infested it. Keyna, however, confident in her saintly gifts, accepted the permission, notwithstanding the warning: and taking possession of the wood, "converted by her prayers all the snakes and vipers of the place into stones. And to this day," remarks Capgrave, the recorder of the legend, "the stones in that country resemble the windings of serpents,

through all the fields and villages, as if they had been so formed by the hand of the engraver."

The transformation of the *serpents* into *stone* is the fable which almost always denotes the neighbourhood of a Dracontium, as we may see in the legend of Cadmus and Harmonia, Python, and others. The remark of Capgrave may allude to the *anguina*, or serpent-stones, so often found in the vicinity of Druidical temples: or even to the specimens of the Cornua Ammonis, which I believe are sometimes found in the neighbourhood.

4. Dartmoor. At Merivale bridge on Dartmoor, four miles from Tavistock, is an interesting group of temples, *two* of the dracontian, and *two* of the circular kind. The temples on Dartmoor are usually in pairs. Whenever these are *circles* we may suppose that one of them was sacred to the sun, and the other to the moon, like the double circles within the great circular area of Abury. At Merivale, the four temples are within a few yards of each other; and though small, are tolerably perfect—one of the circles only being destroyed.

The avenues, *which are straight*, run parallel to each other, east and west. They are 105 feet apart, the longer is 1143 feet in length: the shorter 792. The larger of these temples is of the same order as that of Stanton Drew, having a central circle, and two avenues, each terminated by a circle. These avenues are straight: but this makes no difference of moment from the theory of serpent temples; for they are equally *Dracontia*, i. e. "*Avenues of the sun.*" The second temple has but one circle, which is at the head, and corresponds to the Celtic temple of Callernish, in the island of Lewis; but the latter is far more magnificent. Dr. Stukeley pronounced Callernish to be a Dracontium; but from the descriptions of it by Dr. Borlase and others, it can only be considered such, if that title be extended to straight *avenues*, as well as those which are sinuous.

Of this rectilinear order there are other Dracontia on Dartmoor, although not so extensive as those of Merivale. On the brook side below Black Tor, are two avenues parallel to each other, and running east and west; one of which may be traced for 300 feet, and the other for 180 feet. They are forty feet apart,

and each is terminated by a circle thirty feet in diameter enclosing a cairn. The stones average the same height as those at Merivale, being from three to four feet in elevation.

Similar avenues, but running north and south, occur on Gidleigh common, of which the stones are three feet and a half high and triangular. They may be traced for 432 and 120 feet respectively.

Other monuments of the same nature are scattered over Dartmoor, which from the multitude of such and similar British remains must at one time have been very thickly inhabited. Vestiges of circular huts are not unfrequently seen on the sides of hills, now seldom pressed by the foot of man, and are melancholy memorials of unknown ages, nameless tribes, and generations long since mingled with the dust. It is probable that the early inhabitants of Dartmoor, were driven into these bleak and barren regions from pleasanter and more fertile lands by the pressure of the Romans, Saxons and Danes : and that the parallelitha and circles above described were built in humble imitation of more splendid temples in the lower country. All the works on Dartmoor are those of a

feeble and impoverished people, but amply illustrative of the religion which they exercised in happier times.

5. SHAP. The longest dracontium in Britain, and the only one that in extent could compete with Carnac, was at Shap in Westmorland. The stones were, however, small as compared with those of Abury; the largest now remaining, measures only eight feet in height. The temple of Shap begins at about half a mile south of the village of that name, in a field adjoining the Kendal road; and from this point proceeds in a northerly course, crossing the road near Shap in two rows. The greatest width of the avenue is at the head in the field above mentioned, and measures eighty-eight feet. At this extremity it is bounded by a slightly curved line of six stones placed at irregular intervals; but they appear to have been never erected. Near Shap the two rows converge to the width of fifty-nine feet, and again separating, but not so much as to destroy the appearance of parallelism, proceed in a northerly direction, in which course they may be traced at intervals for a mile and a half. The avenue throughout preserves the sinuosities of the serpent-temple.

Although scarcely two miles of the temple are now recoverable, yet tradition states it once extended to Moor Dovey, a distance of *seven miles from Shap!* In this respect it almost rivals the celebrated Carnac, which can only be traced for eight miles; but in the number and magnitude of its columns, it must have fallen very short of the grandeur of that magnificent dracontium. Indeed nothing in Britain can compete with this pride of Britany. All our parallelitha contain but *two* rows of stones, whereas the temple of Carnac has eleven!

About a mile to the N. E. of Shap is a circle composed of large stones, in tolerable preservation; but whether it was connected with the parallelithon or not, I am unable to determine. The probability of the connection is however great; but I fear the temple is in too dilapidated a state to solve this question.

Dr. Stukeley, who also saw, but did not survey the temple of Shap, pronounced it at once to be a dracontium. The indications must, at that time, (one hundred years since,) have been much stronger than they are now. A traveller in these days would hardly notice the few stones which lie by the side of the Kendal road. Dr. Stukeley, in a letter to an eminent antiquary of

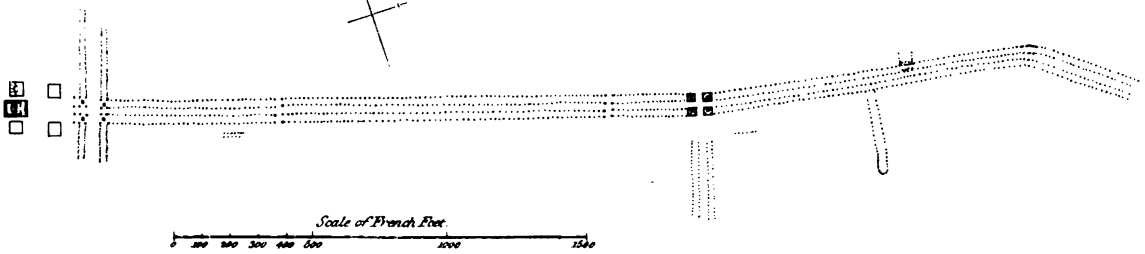
his day, mentions with approbation a plan of the temple of Shap as drawn by a gentleman of Carlisle; but I have not been able to find this document, which now that the dracontium is nearly destroyed, would be almost invaluable.

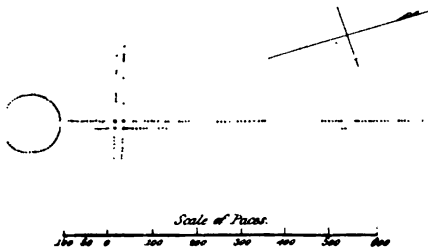
II. The above are the principal known dracontia in Europe. Many more may be perhaps discovered upon diligent inquiry. Parallelitha, as *such*, have been seen by thousands of travellers. The majority have looked, and passed on with indifference: better informed persons have considered them as merely relics of the Druidical superstition; and the covetous farmer has converted, with a ruthless hand, their venerable columns into materials for building walls or repairing houses! But a more enlightened age may even yet rescue from annihilation monuments which have been at once the work and the admiration of ages. The light which has been thrown upon remote antiquity by these venerable ruins is too strong to be extinguished. It is like their own perpetual fire, which, though quenched upon Silbury and Mount St. Michael, still burns in the rites of the ceremonial religion which, at the ashes of Baal, has kindled the tapers of the Church of Rome.

Among the interesting discoveries which result from the theory of dracontia, is the view which it developes of the origin of *columnar architecture.* We admire the beauties and the grandeur of the Parthenon: we gaze with rapture on the isolated pillars of exquisite workmanship, which standing upon the barren and desolated plains of Greece or Asia Minor, fill us alternately with admiration of the art which executed, and indignation at the barbarism which defaced them. But we little think that in the rude and rugged columns of Abury, or Carnac, we see a prototype of the most admired pillars of the most splendid temples of ancient Greece or Asia! And yet there can be little doubt but that such is the fact.

The temples of the sun at Palmyra and Geraza, both in the country formerly devoted to the worship of Oub, the serpent god of Canaan, are illustrations in point. An examination of their columns, *which supported no roof* will justify the inference that they were substituted for those of some ancient dracontia occupying the same sites. The avenues of Palmyra particularly illustrate this theory by their *sinuous* course, although sinuosity as we have before observed, is not *indispensably* necessary to a dra-

The Avenues of the Temple of the Sun - Palmyra.





The Temple of the Sun - Geraza.

Carnac. Stonehenge. Palmyra.

Illustrating the progress of Columnar Architecture.

J. Basire. sc.

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contium, several (such as Callernish and the temples on Dartmoor) being straight. The majority of serpent temples were however sinuous; and such was the temple of the sun at Palmyra. A long avenue of two double rows of columns connected the portal with the sanctuary, which was in the shape of a parallelogram.

The sanctuary of Geraza was formed by a circle of columns, connected like those of Stonehenge by transverse stones resting upon their summits. A straight avenue of two rows led to this circle, and threw out near it two arms of a cross. The plan of the temple is almost a facsimile of the dracontium of Callernish; while the resemblance of its circle to the outer one of Stonehenge would almost persuade us that the architects of the one had either had communication with those of the other, or had copied their design.

Nothing is more probable than that the *first* step in templar architecture being to group together the isolated baitulia, the *second* would be to polish and carve the columns already existing in a rude state; or to substitute for them others of a more finished kind. Thus, by degrees, the rough "*petræ ambrosiæ*" of Greece or Canaan would be fashioned into the elegance

of the Parthenon, or of the temple of the sun at Palmyra. And although the one had no avenues, and the other no circle, yet both being *columnar*, may be referred for their origin to the same standard of early architecture, *the dracontium:* for the varieties of the dracontium include every figure of the classical temple. The dracontium had its avenues, straight and sinuous; its circles; its lunes; its ovals, and its parallelograms. Merivale, Abury, and Carnac, exemplify them all.

Many may deem these notions crude and extravagant; but I confess that the impression which they leave upon my mind is great; neither can I consent to efface it until other explanations, more satisfactory than any hitherto advanced, supply me with a better theory[1].

III. Another discovery still more interesting and useful arises from the doctrine of dracontia. By this may be obtained a key to the many absurd and incredible histories of Pagan mythology respecting *enormous serpents and dragons*

[1] This theory was first suggested to me by my friend P. C. Delagarde, Esq. of Exeter: to whose kindness and ingenuity I am indebted for many improvements in this edition.

covering acres of ground; which could have been nothing but vast dracontia. Dr. Stukeley, the inventor of the theory, has himself applied it to this purpose; and as a few more cases may be adduced in corroboration of his opinion, I will add them. The facts are curious; but the principle upon which this treatise was undertaken, is altogether independent of their probability, although it may be greatly illustrated by it. For *the universal prevalence of the worship of the serpent*, which it was my object to prove, has, I trust, been satisfactorily shown.

It is remarked by Stukeley, that the celebrated PYTHON was, originally, nothing more nor less than a serpentine temple, like that of Abury. Python is described by Ovid (Met. i. 459,) as covering several acres,—"tot jugera ventre prementem." Of the same kind, Dr. Stukeley thinks, was the TITYUS of Virgil, who covered nine acres of ground.

——— "Per tota novem cui jugera corpus
Porrigitur."

Æneid, vi. 596.

In corroboration of the first of these opinions

we may observe that Homer describes Apollo as building a temple [1] *on the spot where he had slain Python.* The stones of which it was composed were "*broad and very long.*" He was assisted by *Trophonius*, who laid "the threshold-stone;" and a multitude of labourers built the temple. Its figure was *circular* in this part; for such I take to be the meaning of the word Ἀμφὶ, in the line which describes the labour [2]. For it can hardly mean that they built the temple "*round*" the "*threshold.*" This, then, was the *sanctum*, and may have corresponded with *the great circle* of Abury.

The description of the building here ceases; and the confused legend makes a transition from the temple to the *serpent* who was slain there by Apollo, and at his command putrefied *upon the spot* by the sun. But in a few lines afterwards Apollo is described as meditating what sort of men he shall put as priests into his "STONY PYTHO [3]." By the same epithet he describes Pytho in other parts of his works; and Pinder [4] makes use of the same designation. It is true

[1] Hymn to Apollo, 294.

[2] Ἀμφὶ δὲ νηὸν ἔνασσαν.

[3] Πυθοῖ ἐνὶ πετρηέσσῃ. l. 390.

[4] Olymp. Ode 6.

that this epithet may allude only to the rocky nature of the soil; but it may allude also to the stones of the temple, and *would* be employed probably for that purpose, on the supposition that the temple was of the serpentine kind. There is something remarkable in the circumstance that *Trophonius* should be concerned in laying the chief stone; and though Agamedes is joined with him in the office, yet Trophonius is, assuredly, not a builder of the temple, but *the temple itself*. For we have already seen that TROPHONIUS is no other than TOR-OPH-ON, "*the temple of the solar serpent.*" Here then we have the serpent again! and putting all these detached facts together, making also due allowance for poetical imagery and mythological exaggeration, we may, not unreasonably, conclude, that the whole history relates to the erection of a SERPENT-TEMPLE, like that of Abury.

If Ovid, in describing Python, alludes to the serpentine figure of the temple, he comes nearer to facts when he represents serpents *changed into stone*. (Met. xi. 56: xii. 23.)

In these instances of metamorphosis, the coincident features of the story indicate Ophiolatreia. Thus *Apollo* is the person who petrifies the Les-

bian dragon (Met. xi.); and the scene of the second story is *Bœotia*, a country where serpent-worship was peculiarly prevalent.

But the poet comes still more closely to the mark, when he describes the flight of Medea from Attica to Colchis. Her chariot was drawn by *dragons*, and she was passing from one Ophite colony to another. In her passage,

> " Æoliam Pitanem lævâ de parte reliquit,
> FACTAQUE DE SAXO LONGI SIMULACHRA DRACONIS[1]."

When we consider that the word *Pitane* may be immediately derived from פתן, *serpens*, we have a presumptive evidence that the serpent was worshipped there: and the above lines from Ovid, corroborating the conjecture, describe the temple; which was, in truth, LONGI SIMULACHRA DRACONIS. Had the poet intended to describe Abury or Carnac, he could not have represented them more accurately.

Dr. Stukeley thinks that the fable of Cadmus, " sowing serpents' teeth," alluded to " his building a serpentine temple:" which is not unlikely: for under such an imagery might the

[1] Ovid. Met. vii. 357.

stones of the temple be poetically described, *the order of teeth* being that in which such stones were erected, single and upright, at equal distances.

Cadmus and Harmonia were changed into serpents at Encheliæ, in Illyria, where "*stones* and a *temple*" were erected to their memory. Scylax Caryandensis, cited by Bryant[1], says,

Κάδμου καὶ Ἁρμονίας οἱ λίθοι εἰσὶν ἐνταῦθα, καὶ ἱερόν.

The situation of this temple is "half a day's sail from the river Arion[2]." No such river occurs in the maps of the country; and Vossius corrects it into "Drylo:" but Scylax, who notices so few things, and only the most remarkable, in his brief memoranda, could hardly have been mistaken in so important a matter as the name of a river. The temple was Ophite; and it is very probable that the nearest river would be sacred to the solar deity. For "Arion" compounds the two titles of the sun, Aur and On.

"The temple," observes Bryant, "was an Ophite Petra, which induced people to believe

[1] Anal. ii. 471.

[2] Scylax, Periplus. p. 9. cum notis Vossii.

that there were in these temples *serpents petrified*[1]. It is possible that in later times the deity may have been worshipped under this form; whence it might be truly said of Cadmus and Harmonia, that they would one day be exhibited in stone." Bryant here refers to Nonnus *Dionusiac.* l. xliv. p. 1144, who says of Cadmus and Harmonia,

Λαϊνέην ἤμελλον ἔχειν ὀφιώδεα μορφήν.

This line, however, I cannot find in Nonnus: but one not much unlike it occurs in lib. xliv. line 367, of that writer:

——οἷς χρόνος ἕρπων
Ὤπασε πετρήεσσαν ἔχειν ὀφιώδεα μορφήν.

In which the allusion to the serpentine form of the *temple* appears evident. The conversion of *temples* into *gods* is of common occurrence in mythology; and I have no doubt but that the line from Nonnus, above cited, describes the figure of the λίθοι καὶ ἱερὸν, remarked by Scylax. Bryant seems to think that "*the stones*" sacred to Cadmus and Harmonia were merely *stylæ*—

[1] This notion was derived from the *serpentine figures* of the temples themselves.

commemorative pillars; and consequently introduces the word "*two*" into his translation, *which is not in the original.* The words of Scylax are, "*Here are the stones and temple of Cadmus and Harmonia.*" From which it does not necessarily appear that "*the stones*" and "*the temple*" were not identical. I believe they were; and that they constituted a serpent-temple like Abury: or, as Bryant elsewhere employs the word, A DRACONTIUM.

For the origin of this word, "*dracontium,*" he adduces a derivation by no means indicative of his usual penetration. Thus he tells us, that "toward each extremity of the oval temples of the Phœnicians were erected mounds, on which were towers. These towers were generally royal edifices, and at the same time held sacred. They were termed *Tarchon*, like Tarchonium in Hetruria, which, by a corruption, was in latter times rendered *Trachon* . . . . . The term *Trachon* seems to have been still further sophisticated by the Greeks, and expressed Δράκων[1]." . . . . . "When the Greeks understood that in these temples the people worshipped a serpent deity, they concluded that

[1] Anal. ii. 132.

Trachon was *a serpent;* and hence came the name of DRACO to be appropriated to such an animal[1]."

How much more simple and probable is the inference of Dr. Stukeley, who reasons from a *fact?* Verbal coincidences can never be put in competition with historical facts; but in the case before us, these coincidences are strained, and the fact of the existence of a serpentine temple at Abury placed beyond all doubt[2]. This error of Bryant leads him into another, when he talks about the "*windows*[3]" of a dracontium. We should be startled at a theory founded upon the *windows* of Abury, or Stonehenge.

That the conjecture of Bryant, in deriving the legends of the mythological *dragons* from the word *Tarchon*, is inadmissible, appears again by an extract from Pausanias, which (curiously enough) he himself quotes to corroborate his position, whereas it tends directly to confirm that of Stukeley. "In the road be-

[1] Anal. ii. 141.

[2] The real meaning of the word *dracontium* is, probably, "*an avenue of the sun*," as I have before stated.

[3] Anal. ii. 148.

tween Thebes and Glisas, you may see a place *encircled by select stones*, which the Thebans call THE SERPENT'S HEAD [1]."

Dr. Stukeley also cites this remarkable passage, to illustrate his observations upon the HEAD of the Abury serpent, which rested upon a promontory, called, in like manner, SNAKES-HEAD. (*Hakpen.*) This was also "*a place encircled by select stones.*" And to complete the resemblance, there is near this Theban temple, a lofty hill corresponding to *Silbury*, upon which a temple was erected to Jupiter [2].

But, though the premises of Bryant were conjectural, his conclusions were for the most part correct, and his illustrations ingenious. I proceed to subjoin some of them as equally applicable to our theory.

"Iphicrates related that in Mauritania there were dragons of such extent that grass grew upon their backs. What can be meant under this representation but a dracontium, within whose precincts they encouraged verdure [3]?"

Again: "It is said (by Maximus Tyrius, Dissert. 8, c. vi. p. 85,) that Taxiles, a mighty prince of India, carried Alexander the Great to

[1] Paus. 570. [2] 570. [3] Anal. ii. 135.

see a *dragon*, which was sacred to Dionusus, and itself esteemed a god. It was of a stupendous size, being in extent equal to *five acres*, and resided in a low, deep place, walled round to a great height. The Indians offered sacrifices to it, and it was daily fed by them from their flocks and herds." . . . . "Two *dragons* of the like nature are mentioned by Strabo, (lib. xv. p. 1022) which are said to have resided in the mountains of Abisares, in India; the one was eighty cubits in length, the other one hundred and forty. Similar to the above, is the account given by Posidonius of a serpent which he saw in the plains of Macra in Syria . . . . He says that it was about an acre in length, and of a thickness so remarkable, that two persons on horseback, when they rode on opposite sides, could not see one another. Each scale was as big as a shield, and a man might ride in at its mouth. What can this description allude to," says Bryant, "but the ruins of an Ophite temple, which is represented in this enigmatical manner to raise admiration? The plains of Macra were not far from Lebanon and Hermon, where the Hivites resided, and where serpent-worship particularly prevailed. The Indian

dragon above mentioned seems to have been of the same nature. It was, probably, a temple and its environs, where a society of priests resided, who were maintained by the public, and who worshipped the deity under the semblance of a serpent[1]."

Besides these Ophite temples, Bryant discovered a legend of two others in the neighbourhood of Damascus[2]. These *dragons*, according to Nonnus, were overcome by the hero Damascenus, an earthborn giant. "One of the monsters with which he fought is described of an enormous size—a serpent, *in extent of fifty acres:* which certainly must have a reference to the grove and garden, wherein such Ophite temple stood, at Damascus. For the general measurement of these wonderful beings by *acres*, proves that such an estimate could not relate to any thing of solid contents, but to an inclosure of that superficies."

The dragon of Colchos, which guarded the golden fleece, is also considered by Bryant to have been a dracontic temple. There was a settlement of Ophites in Colchis, which is indicated by the name of the river *Ophis*. This

[1] Bryant. Anal. ii. 105, &c. [2] Ibid. 142.

river was so named from a body of people, who settled upon its banks, and were said to be conducted by a serpent [1].

An attentive perusal of Diodorus Siculus, lib. iv. s. 47, will perhaps incline the reader to acquiesce in the conclusion of Bryant respecting the Colchian dragon. Diodorus himself resolves the legend into a story about a *temple*, where the treasure, the golden fleece, was kept under the guardianship of *Tauric* soldiers. These, he contends, were the *bulls*, who were associated with the *dragon* in guarding the treasure. The *dragon* was their commander, an officer named *Draco*. The legend is, that the golden fleece deposited there by Phryxus, was guarded by a sleepless dragon; and bulls, breathing fire from their nostrils, lay by the altar of the temple. Jason, having first subdued the bulls, compelled them to the yoke, and ploughed up the ground; in which, like Cadmus, *he sowed serpents' teeth*. These teeth, becoming animated in the form of armed men, fought together and destroyed one another. He then lulled the dragon, and bore away the fleece [2].

The explanation of Diodorus is simple, and

[1] Bryant, Anal. ii. 208. [2] Ovid Met. 7.

in default of a better, not unreasonable. But the word "*Tor*," which he supposes to have been misunderstood for "*bulls*," when in reality it alluded to men who came from *Taurica*, is much more likely to have been the Chaldee מגד, *a tower*, mistaken by Greeks, who were ignorant of the language of the country, for תור, *a bull*. Hence the whole error. The "bulls" were *towers*—perhaps fortified lighthouses; and the light which burned in them gave occasion to the fable of "*fire breathing bulls* [1]."

Having resolved the "bulls" into "towers," we may reasonably conjecture that the "dragon" was *stone*. The temple will thus become a dracontium. This dracontium was stormed by Jason, who, having first taken the towers which protected the temple, moved against the latter, compelling the garrisons of the former into his service: and having by some stratagem —perhaps a nocturnal assault—set the defenders of the dracontium against each other, succeeded in his enterprise of plundering it of the treasure. The *sowing of the serpents' teeth*, I conceive to be an expression which has crept into the fable, from a confused recollection of the *figure*

[1] Bryant, Anal. ii. 106.

of the temple, and the *manner of its formation*, by upright, equidistant stones. This incident, so violently and uselessly introduced, seems an index to the whole fable, and identifies it as relating to the plundering of a dracontium.

In turning over the pages of Pausanias and Strabo, we frequently meet with passages which may naturally be interpreted into descriptions of Ophite temples. Thus near the river Chimarrus in Argolis was a circular inclosure "*marking the spot where Pluto descended into Tartarus with Proserpine.*" This legend indicates the temple to be a dracontium of which the central circle only remained. Other temples occur which might admit the same inference; but they are for the most part too obscurely described to adduce as illustrations. I cannot, however, pass by, without a remark, "*the stones of Amphion,*" mentioned by Pausanias, (568,) because the legend attached to them corresponds with a tradition very common in England, respecting the circular, druidical temples:—"The stones which lie near the tomb of Amphion (in *Bœotia*) are *rude and not laboured by art.* They say that they were the stones *which followed the music of Amphion.*"

A similar fable is related of Orpheus, who, it will be remembered, was the high priest of Ophiolatreia in Thrace.

Respecting the druidical circles, it was a common tradition that the stones which composed them were once animated beings, and petrified in the mazes of a dance. Thus Stonehenge was called "*the dance of the giants;*" and Rowldrich, a Druids' temple, near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire, is supposed to have been a king and his nobles similarly metamorphosed. The same is reported of Stanton Drew, in Somersetshire, which is vulgarly called "*the weddings;*" being supposed to have been a company of friends at a nuptial festival, who were petrified in the midst of a dance.

Another Druids' temple, in Cumberland, is called "*Long Meg and her daughters*" from a similar tradition [1].

If these coincidences prove nothing else, they prove that "*the stones of Amphion,*" and "*Orpheus,*" were circular temples of the druidical structure. The stones of *Amphion* were probably a temple of the sun; "AMPHION" being

[1] Stukeley, Abury, 83.

nothing more than AM-PHI-ON[1], "*the oracle of Ham the sun:*" and ORPHEUS itself may be resolved into a similar meaning—OR-PHI, "*solis oraculum.*"

The frequent mention of the serpent-deity OPS, in connexion with STONES, is a remarkable feature in remote mythology. It was OPS who deceived Saturn with the stone *Abadir;* and "the heathen philosophers explained OPS as the divine power pervading mountains and *stony places*[2]." Might not this connexion have arisen from the peculiar construction of the Ophite temples?

These circumstances may appear trivial; but trifles not unfrequently lead to important results. In every walk of science, a trifle, disregarded by incurious thousands, has repaid the inquisitiveness of a single observer with unhoped-for knowledge. And what has been in science, may be in history. Little events, and accidental allusions, in themselves insignificant, may form a link in the chain of obscure mythology, which shall act as a conductor to scriptural truth.

[1] See Bryant on the word "*Amphi.*" Anal. i. 316.

[2] Euseb. Præp. Evang. 109.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DECLINE OF SERPENT WORSHIP.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DECLINE OF SERPENT-WORSHIP.

HAVING traced the origin and progress of Ophiolatreia, it may be useful to ascertain the causes and periods of its decline. Such an inquiry, though little more than a recapitulation of facts already mentioned, will tend to give a clearer view of the subject as a *whole*; and to meet an objection which might be urged against the legitimacy of some of the preceding inferences. The argument of Ophiolatreia may in some cases appear to have been grounded upon insufficient data: facts may have been appealed to in support of the theory which may seem to have had their origin in accident, or in superstitions apparently unconnected with the worship of the serpent. But if reasons can be assigned for the partial prevalence of Ophiolatreia in some countries, and its non-appearance in others, and its total suppression in all where-

ever it once reigned in plentitude of power, the argument of this treatise will be restored and established.

It is not to be expected that the worship of the serpent should be found prevailing with the same degree of intensity in every country. Local circumstances, at this distance of years impossible to be estimated, may have caused many modifications, even if the idolatry had been originally *uniformly* diffused. But I do not contend for *uniform* diffusion, the argument is *universality*, and not *uniformity*.

The prevalence of this idolatry has been proved to be *so* general, that we have a reasonable ground for considering it as at one time or other *universal*. The principal causes to which the decline of serpent-worship may be referred are *religious wars—hostile invasions—mental improvement—the progress of Christianity* —and *the Mohammedan conquests*.

In the infancy of mankind true religion was limited to the descendants of Seth. The children of Cain carried with them from Paradise all that the Tree of Knowledge could teach—the knowledge of worldly "*good*," and of moral "*evil*." The rapid development of the human

mind in every science which tended to the promotion of earthly comforts was strongly exemplified in this apostate family, and proved that "the children of this world" were always "in their generation wiser than the children of light" in things which concern the gratification of the senses.

Of the family of Seth little is recorded besides their names, and that little assures us that they were "not of this world." But scarcely had Cain departed from the garden of Eden before "he built him a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch[1]." When the increase of his family suggested separation, new inventions arose from the new necessity. Jabal, his descendant in the fifth degree, introduced the use of tents, and the arts of agricultural and pastoral life. "He was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle[2]." At the same time, as if to show that simplicity of manners was not essentially the characteristic of a pastoral life, his brother Jubal invented the elegant art of music. "He was the father of them that handle the harp and organ[3]." And

[1] Gen. iv. 17. [2] Ib. 20. [3] Ib. 21.

to complete the picture of worldly ease and comfort, as enjoyed by the more godless of the sons of Adam, another brother, Tubalcain, became "an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron[1]." So that probably in less than three hundred years from the creation of man civilization had arrived at such a degree of perfection, that not only the necessaries, but even the luxuries of life were to be found in the family of the fugitive Cain.

Nothing like this is recorded of the posterity of Seth. All that we know of them is the simple but interesting fact, that "Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him[2]." How different from that Enoch, the son of Cain, remembered only by the city which bore his name!

The awful extent of idolatry in those "days of rebuke and blasphemy" is strongly depicted in the short but memorable record—"In those days began men to call upon the name of the Lord[3]." *Not* that they had never called upon this name *before*, but that, induced by the wickedness which was increasing around them, they "gave themselves *then* more earnestly to prayer."

[1] Gen. iv. 22. [2] Ib. v. 29. [3] Ib. iv. 26.

Architecture, invented by their ungodly kinsmen, had been abused to the erection of heathen temples. "Brass and iron," introduced for domestic purposes, had been prostituted to the service of an insane idolatry: while a delirious multitude were dancing before its altars to the sounds of licentious music. It was high time, then, for the remnant of the sons of Seth to "call upon the name of the Lord," when rival superstitions disputed the dominion once held by the religion of JEHOVAH.

At that time, probably, commenced the reigns of the two great Apostasies which, for so many ages, divided and desolated the heathen world. The worship of the SUN and the worship of the SERPENT—the one a superstition of nature, the other a superstition of tradition—then, probably, usurped the throne of true religion.

We have seen that these two were the most ancient of false religions, and that there is every ground of conjecture for assigning to each an antediluvian origin. The very form of the expression, "Then began men to call upon the name of THE LORD," intimates that *some men* had called upon other names. This distinction between truth and falsehood would hardly have

been drawn had there been no false religions to furnish the distinction. That some kinds of idolatry must have prevailed before the flood, is probable, from the consideration that *moral* turpitude *only*, would scarcely have been sufficient to draw down the curse of God upon a whole world. Immorality, doubtless, was awfully prevalent: but *ungodliness* also must have prevailed to an equal or greater degree. God would scarcely have been so provoked, had not men prostituted their souls to Satan as well as their bodies to carnal lusts.

Such being the case, no superstitions were more natural than the worship of the SUN, the source of life and strength and vegetation; and the worship of the SERPENT, the recorded author of the most wonderful revolution in the moral world, which the tongues of men and angels could ever record. A creature which, under the agency of an indwelling spirit, could destroy the best work of God upon earth, seemed, to the ignorant and carnal mind, possessed of a power almost, if not altogether, divine. Hence the origin of serpent-worship.

Among the many arguments which prove the priority of these two superstitions, not the least

available is *their constant hostility* in every country in the world. Such an hostility would be the natural result of the position which they occupied as the two earliest of superstitions. True religion being obscured, (as we have every reason to believe it was,) the worshippers of the sun would naturally arrogate to themselves the privilege of the truth: and the Fall of Man being remembered as the work of the SERPENT, they would as naturally regard the Ophites as worshippers of the *Devil*, and feel themselves under a bond of eternal enmity against them.

Hence the whole struggle, originating in the aggressions of the worshippers of the sun, and carried on by the retaliation of the worshippers of the serpent. Tradition is full of their perpetual feuds. They enter into almost every leading fable; are depicted upon some of the most ancient works of art, and recorded in some of the oldest histories of man. For the verification of these assertions, it will be expedient to take a survey of those countries in which Ophiolatreia has principally prevailed.

1. BABYLON. Of Babylon we know little beyond the fact, that "*they of the city worshipped*

a dragon," whom Daniel the prophet destroyed by his prayers. In consequence of this triumph, the idolatry was prohibited by a royal decree. The date of this prohibition is assigned to the first year of king Cyrus. The symbolical worship, however, continued for many years afterwards, Diodorus Siculus having seen in the ruined temple of Bel, images of silver serpents associated with the ordinary gods of the Gentiles.

2. PERSIA. Less accurate information as to circumstances, but equally certain as to the principal fact, is found in the history of Persia. How far the worship of the Host of Heaven may have superseded that of the serpent in the time of Cyrus, who governed both Babylon and Persia, is unknown. It is probable that the decree which suppressed Ophiolatreia in the former, suppressed it also in the latter country. But the rise of Zoroaster and the decisive success of his doctrines, unquestionably overthrew every other false religion in the Persian empire. If this philosopher was, as some suppose, a servant of the prophet Daniel, the influence acquired by the master over the minds of the nation would

naturally impart some power to the disciple; and the royal decree having opportunely abolished Ophiolatreia, an opening was made for any new system of religion which an artful and influential teacher might desire to inculcate. Zoroaster seized the favourable moment and met with no resistance. His success was the more assured, since he appeared rather as a reformer than an originator. The old Magian idolatry assumed, under his hand, a more alluring appearance. Some of its metaphysical absurdities were removed, and its simplicity of worship put on the gorgeous apparel of a faith which appealed to the senses rather than to the imagination. Fire temples arose above the naked "hill altars" of their ruder ancestors; and the sacred flame which his hallowed or daring hand was supposed to have brought down from heaven, was religiously guarded by an appointed priesthood. So awful were the sanctions of this new religion, that the whole nation gave way to the irresistible evidence of its divine authority. The worshippers of the serpent, if any remained, quailed under the genius of a prophet who had gazed upon the true Schechinah; and the portion of fire which he exhibited, in token of his ascent to heaven,

led captive the minds of a trembling people prepared to believe any thing of the servant of Daniel. The worship of the serpent, therefore, fell, and there was no blood upon the sword of the triumphant religion.

3. HINDÛSTAN. Far different was the case in Hindûstan. *There* fable and history alike teem with the perpetual conflicts of the sun and serpent. Surya is ever the enemy of Budha. The latter, under the hateful form of a *serpent*, had carried off the daughter of the son of Manna, and stolen the sacred books of Crishna, the incarnate son of Brahma. One of his family had also seized upon a horse which the son of Ramah had designed to be sacrificed to the sun [1]. The race of Budha was therefore proscribed; and the children of Surya, *i. e.* the worshippers of the *sun*, and the children of Crishna, *i. e.* the votaries of the *incarnate Son of God*, felt themselves called upon to execute the sentence. The offences imputed to the *serpent* Budha are remarkable. *The abduction of the woman*, and the *stealing of the sacred books of the incarnate God*,

[1] Tod's Rajahstan, 535.

indicate the events in Paradise as the remote and traditional cause of the animosity.

The effects of this hostility were soon apparent. Long before the fatal irruption of the Mohammedans the vengeance of the allies had swept, like a simoom, over the cities of the Ophites. Alexander the Great found this unhappy remnant isolated in the range of mountains which lie to the west of the Indus, in Caubul. Upon the mountain *Tak*, under their king and priest *Taxiles*, a tribe of Hindûs securely worshipped the abomination of Paradise. The Macedonian monarch was shown an enormous dragon, "five acres in extent," which was the object of their adoration. This dragon, we have seen, could have been nothing but a *dracontium*, for it is measured by its *superficial extent in land measure*, which was the universal method of describing serpent temples both in poetry and historical prose. In these idolaters the invader of India found natural and faithful allies against the common enemy Porus. But his retirement left them at the mercy of their exasperated foes, who were not slow in exacting vengeance. In the process of time they were expelled from the fastnesses of Zabulistan and

and scattered through the Punjab. They remained in this broken condition until the Mohammedan Afghans bursting in among them with the terrible alternative of "the sword or the Koran," completed their destruction.

The ferocity with which the wars of Surya and Budha had been carried on, may be estimated by the recital of a single fact. The Takshacs had slain a king of Delhi, and his successor, in revenge, sacrificed in one campaign twenty thousand of this small but devoted race [1].

It ceases, therefore, to be a matter of surprise, that the idolatry of the serpent very soon degenerated into the mere mythic and symbolical worship which now characterizes the religion of the Brahmins.

4. CHINA, BURMAH, and SIAM. These countries retain but few impressions of their primeval superstitions. They were more under the influence of Budhism than Hindûstan; but their present religions are so different from the simplicity of Ophiolatreia, that we cannot help suspecting the alterations to have been produced by

[1] Tod's Rajahstan, 536.

the gradual encroachments of the Brahminical doctrines. It is difficult, at this distance of time, to assign all the reasons of the decline of the serpent worship which, from the adoration of the mystical dragon, we conclude must have once overspread these countries. In China, however, the celebrated Confucius might have reformed the old idolatry, and perhaps left it in its present form. That Confucius was *born* a serpent-worshipper, is probable from the fable that *two serpents* attended his mystical washing [1].

5. In ARABIA, the worship of the serpent was very early overthrown, and gave way to the adoration of the Host of Heaven. But if any traces of this superstition lingered among the innumerable idolatries of a land which was once divided between AUR and AUB, the sword and the Koran made an equal end of all.

6. SYRIA. The Syrian Ophites when scattered by the victorious arms of Joshua [2], preferred, for the most part, to resign their country rather than forsake their creed. Those of the Hivites

[1] Kœmpfer Japan, 246.

[2] Bochart. See also ch. iii. *Greece.*

of Mount Libanus, who could not hide themselves among their native rocks (and thus fulfil the divine decree of being "left to prove" Israel), carried their religion into the islands of the Archipelago, into Thrace, into Macedonia, into Greece. Their subsequent history is to be found in the fables of mythology, in which the synchronous march of Cadmus to the Hellespont may indicate the retreat of a party of Kadmonites in that direction. Thus was the Ophiolatreia of the Canaanites overthrown, and the small remnant which remained, had their revenge by tempting the Israelites to worship[1] the brazen serpent of Moses, which had been preserved as one of the memorials of their deliverances in the Wilderness. This small remnant of Hivites, avowedly left by Jehovah to "prove Israel," was never entirely exterminated: for the spirit of Ophiolatreia again manifested itself in the early ages of Christianity in the form of the Ophite heresy, against which the pens of Epiphanius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian, were so powerfully directed[2].

7. Egypt. Ophiolatreia was never predo-

[1] 2 Kings xviii. 4.

[2] See ch. i. *Syria.*

minant in Egypt. It formed but one of a multitude of superstitions, which divided that country into as many religions as there were districts. Their mutual animosity is well described by Juvenal in his nineteenth Satire. The "immortale odium et nunquam sanabile vulnus" of religious antipathy is illustrated by a tale of a battle between the Ombi, and the people of Tentyra:—and doubtless the same spirit of discord was universal. It was, however, all hushed by the hermetic seal of the preachers of the Koran.

8. ABYSSINIA. More distinct traces of the state of serpent-worship were left in Æthiopia. On the borders of Abyssinia the serpent is still worshipped by the Shangalla Negroes; but the glory of its overthrow in the more civilized portions of the land of Habesh, is ascribed to nine missionaries of the Christian church of Alexandria. Few facts in history are more clearly recorded than the conversion of the Abyssinian Ophites. It occurred during the Episcopacy of Athanasius, about the middle of the fourth century.

9. WHIDAH. Equally circumstantial is the narrative of the suppression of Ophiolatreia in Whidah. The fatal blow was given in 1726, by the Dahomeys, who destroyed all the serpents which had been kept for religious purposes. Captain Snelgrave visited the place only three weeks after the event. In other parts of Africa the superstition sunk beneath the scymetars of the Mohammedan Arabs: but if it still continue to linger among the mountains of the interior, the same fatal enemy will find it out[1].

10. The worshippers of the serpent had as little rest in Europe. The unremitting hostility of the children of the sun is indelibly stamped upon the annals of Grecian fable. The contest of Apollo and Python for the temple of Delphi, was a struggle of the sun-worshippers, for an Ophite sanctuary. One remarkable feature, however, distinguishes the fable. The promise of Paradise finds a singular parallel in the history of Apollo[2]: and this very circumstance throws a light upon the *cause* of the hostility against the serpent. It would appear by the

[1] Lander's Preface.

[2] See "Fables," ch. v.

fable that the Zabeans took possession of the Dracontium of Delphi, and substituted their own rites for those of the Ophites. But whether the country was still favourably disposed towards the old religion, or whether the usurpers desired to innovate gradually without too much violence to the prejudices of the votaries of the serpent, they preserved the general form and figure of the temple, together with some of its peculiar customs. The serpentine avenue was therefore only so far disturbed as to admit a central circular temple in honour of the SUN[1]; the *Pythoness* still gave her oracles from the *dracontic* tripod; and *live serpents* were still kept in the subterranean recesses. A similar policy was observed by the triumphant children of the sun in other parts of Europe.

11. The idolatry of the serpent lost its integrity in THRACE, MACEDONIA, and EPIRUS, in a more peaceable manner. It gradually subsided into the mysteries of Dionusus. There is a mention of an attempt to unite it with the idolatry of the sun by a reformer whom history has agreed to call "Orpheus." The real mean-

[1] See ch. vi.

ing of this word is probably, "*The oracle of* OR." *(Or-phi.)* OR was the same as the ORUS of the Egyptians, and the UR of the Chaldees; and was a title of the sun taken from his attribute of *light*. Orpheus, then, might have been some remarkable priest of the sun, who introduced many innovations into the religion of Thrace. On this account he was probably murdered by the Bacchantes in the horrible manner described by the poets. The Bacchantes were priestesses of the Dionusan Ophiolatreia, which he attempted to reform.

The persecution of Orpheus by the worshippers of the serpent, is corroborated by a curious tradition preserved by Ovid, Metam. lib. xi. which mentions the fate of his detruncated head. It was carried by the Hebrus into the sea, and thrown upon the sands of the island of Lesbos, where a *serpent* endeavouring to lacerate it was changed by *Apollo* into *stone!* This metamorphosis relates probably to a *dracontium* at Lesbos, which was an Ophite settlement: and the inference from the fable is this—that the remnant of the followers of Orpheus, escaping from the Thracian massacre, and landing at Lesbos, were inhospitably treated by the Ophites of that

island, but had the good fortune to elude their violence. The fable of Orpheus speaks also of his wife Eurydice having been previously slain by a *serpent*. This incident may mean that some Orphic rite, personified by this name, was destroyed by the serpent-worshippers. Orpheus, however, seems to have regarded the general policy of the Zabeans. His Institutes, which have been preserved under the title of the "Orphic Hymns," enrol the serpent as the chief symbol of the Cabiri.

12. The constant animosity of the rival religions of the sun and serpent is strikingly illustrated by the Etruscan Vases, which have been lately found at Canino, on the supposed site of the ancient Vitulonia. Whether these vases were of native manufacture or not, the histories which they record belong to Greece. The subjects seem chiefly to be borrowed from the Grecian Mythology and the Trojan war. Upon several of the vases are warriors fighting, some of whose shields are charged with an *eagle*, the device of the sun-worshippers [1], and others with a *serpent*, the emblem of the Ophites. In all

[1] Tod's Rajahstan, 535.

of them the warrior with the eagle shield is represented as victorious.

One of the vases bears, what is named, a representation of *Hector:* and, curiously enough, his device is a *serpent*. Now we know from other sources that the Phrygians were Ophites, and this picture opportunely illustrates the fact. Is it possible that the Trojan war may have been undertaken upon a *religious* quarrel? It is certainly strange that in all these historic pictures the Grecian warriors are denoted by the emblem of the *sun*, and the Trojan by that of the mystic *serpent*. The very cause of the quarrel assigned by tradition remarkably coincides with the *Indian* story of the wars of Surya and Budha. *The abduction of a woman* is stated to have been the origin of both the Indian and the Trojan feuds.

13. COLCHOS. But whatever may have been the true nature of the Trojan war, another event in Grecian history, almost as celebrated, was undoubtedly an expedition against the odious race of the serpent.

The voyage of the Argonauts had avowedly a religious object; and the storming of the DRACONTIUM of Colchos cannot be mistaken. The crew of the Argo might indeed have been what Bryant

supposes they were—ARKITES—worshippers of the personified ark of Noah: but according to the principles of his own analysis, *Jason*, the leader was the same name as *Æson*, and Æson was a compound of Æs, "fire" and ON the Solar God. The Argonauts may therefore have been under the guidance of a warrior of the Sun —an inveterate and universal enemy of the family of the Serpent.

It matters not, however, what was the religion of the navigators of the Argo. Their expedition proves the *custom* of religious wars against the Ophites; and their success determines the epoch of the overthrow of Ophiolatreia in Colchis.

14. BRITAIN—GAUL—BRITANY, &c. Changing the country we change only the manner of telling the same story. The destruction of Ophiolatreia in the west and north of Europe, though as complete as in the east, was brought about in a more peaceable manner. In Britain, Gaul, Germany, and Scandinavia, the original worship of the serpent had been much modified by civilization before it was subverted by the missionaries of Christian Rome.

In *Britany*, however, the idolaters maintained

a more determined opposition: and if we may judge from some of the present superstitions of the peasantry, were never *thoroughly* converted. The old Zabean policy of gradual conversion was adopted by the first missionaries of the Christian church. Instead of striking a decisive blow at once they deemed it more prudent to wink at a few errors, than by precipitation incur the danger of a total failure. Hence in the vicinity of CARNAC, which may be called the "Trachonitis" of Europe, the oracle of BELUS is to be found in the parish of BELS; the *serpent*, the universal emblem of consecration, decorates the exterior of some of the oldest churches. The sacred mount of Fire near the avenues of the Dracontium is a consecrated spot: the ancient dance of BAAL, descriptive of the Ophite hierogram is annually exhibited at the carnival of Erdeven: while the peasant still turns his face in prayer to the Kebla of the Ophites—the Serpent's head at Kerzerho—which bears accordingly the expressive name of "*the place of the stones of prayer*[1]."

15. There remains, then, only one portion of

[1] These two latter facts were communicated to me by my friend General de Penhouët.

the globe in which we have not accounted for the decline of serpent-worship. But, remarkable as is the coincidence—we find in AMERICA the same agent at work which overthrew Ophiolatreia in Hindûstan, in Persia, in Greece—nay, in almost every country of the known world.

We have remarked the prevalence of serpent worship in PERU: history has preserved the cause of its extinction.

Tupac Yupanqui, the eleventh Inca, marched against the Ophites who resided on the borders of his dominions, with the avowed object of extermination or conversion. His success against two tribes of Indians is recorded in Harris's Collection of Voyages, vol. i. p. 784.

Huayna Capac, the twelfth Inca, in like manner suppressed the Ophiolatreia of the people of Manta[1]. It is probable that at one time the worship of the serpent was the general religion of Mexico and Peru. The Mexican hieroglyphics and statues abundantly illustrate this fact: and the popular traditions of the Peruvians respecting Manco Capac relate probably to the first successful missionary of the Sun[2] who

[1] Garcilasso, lib. ix. c. 8.

[2] Robertson's *America*, ii. 293.

arrived, as the legends state, from a foreign country.

The triumphant children of the Sun could never, however, succeed in abolishing all traces of serpent-worship. Like the rest of the Zabeans in other parts of the world, they were compelled to tolerate what they could not extirpate. Many Ophite superstitions and practices were therefore retained in the religions of Mexico and Peru, as we have seen under the head of Ophiolatreia in those countries.

The victorious sun-worshippers could not even gain the absolute ascendancy over the barbarous people of North America. The High Priest of the Virginians wore, even to the days of Christian conquest, a sacerdotal ornament of *snakes' skins* upon his head, analogous to the customs of the priests of the Egyptian Isis; while the natives of the country N.W. of Louisiana, (even down to the year 1741) had his body tattooed with the united emblems of the SUN and the SERPENT, and carried in his hand a sacrificial instrument carved with the representation of A SERPENT UPON THE SUN [1]!

We have now taken a general and cursory

[1] See the Plate.

survey of the causes which produced the decline of serpent-worship: the chief of which appears to have been the uniform hostility of the worshippers of the sun. Whatever this hostility spared, was almost annihilated by the preaching of the early Christians or the sword and the Koran of the inflexible Mohammedans. The Mohammedans in the east, and the Christians in the west, completed what had been begun by the children of Surya, and carried on by the votaries of Crishna or Apollo,—the adventurers of the heroic ages, and the arms of the host of Joshua. So that few and almost imperceptible are the traces now existing of an idolatry which once called the world its own. The subjects of the poetical apostrophe of Lucan,—

> "Vos quoque qui *cunctis* innoxia NUMINA terris
> Serpitis aurato nitidi fulgore DRACONES,"

are now coiled obscurely in the woods of the Abyssinian Shangalla, or the almost inaccessible mountains of central Africa, protected only by the impossibility or inutility of the pursuit.

But it is not for us to lament the feeble traces of a superstition which only commemorates the victory of the evil spirit over the soul of the fallen man. Idolatry has been permitted long

enough to prove the divine origin of Christianity; and this point being established, it becomes every believer in the Gospel of Christ, to pray that "the whole earth may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" and that "the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of GOD and of His CHRIST;" and "that they may reign," with the HOLY SPIRIT, in one undivided Godhead, "FOR EVER AND EVER."

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY.

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I. In the preceding pages we have traced THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT from *Babylonia*, east and west, through *Persia*, *Hindûstan*, *China*, *Mexico*, *Britain*, *Scandinavia*, *Italy*, *Illyricum*, *Thrace*, *Greece*, *Asia Minor*, and *Phœnicia*. Again, we have observed the same idolatry prevailing north and south, through *Scythia* on the one hand, and *Africa* on the other. THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT WAS, THEREFORE, UNIVERSAL. For not only did the sacred serpent enter into the symbolical and ritual service of every religion which recognised THE SUN; but we even find him in countries where solar worship was altogether unknown—as in *Sarmatia*, *Scandinavia*, and *the Gold Coast of*

Africa. In every known country of the ancient world the serpent formed a prominent feature in the ordinary worship, and made no inconsiderable figure in their Hagiographa, entering alike into legendary and astronomical mythology.

Whence, then, did this ONLY-UNIVERSAL IDOLATRY originate? That it *preceded* POLYTHEISM, is indicated by the attribution of the title OPS, and the consecration of the symbolical serpent to so many of the heathen deities. The title OPS was conferred upon Terra, Vesta, Rhea, Cybele, Juno, Diana—and even Vulcan is called by Cicero, *Opas* [1].

In Grecian mythology, the symbolical serpent was sacred to Saturn, Jupiter, Apollo, Bacchus, Mars, Æsculapius, Rhea, Juno, Minerva, Diana, Ceres, and Proserpine—that is, the serpent was a sacred emblem of ***nearly all the gods and goddesses*** [2].

The same remark may be extended to the Theogonies of Egypt, Hindûstan, and Mexico—in all of which we find the serpent emblematic, not of *one* deity, but of *many*.

[1] Bryant, i. 61. [2] *Just. Mart.* Apol i. 60.

What then, is the inference?—*That the serpent was the most ancient of the heathen gods;* and that as his attributes were multiplied by superstitious devotion, new names were invented to represent the new personifications which, in the progress of time, dividing the unity, destroyed the integrity of the original worship. Yet each of these schismatic superstitions bore some faint trace of its dracontic origin, in retaining the symbolical serpent. Some of these deifications may be easily traced, though others are obscure and difficult.

The mystic serpent entered into the mythology of every nation; consecrated almost every temple; symbolized almost every deity; was imagined in the heavens, stamped upon the earth, and ruled in the realms of everlasting sorrow. His *subtilty* raised him into an emblem of *wisdom;* he was therefore pictured upon the ægis of Minerva, and crowned her helmet. *The knowledge of futurity* which he displayed in Paradise exalted him into a symbol of vaticination; he was therefore *oracular*, and reigned at Delphi. The "*opening of the eyes*" of our deluded first parents obtained him an altar in the temple of the god of *healing;* he is therefore the constant

companion of Æsculapius. In the distribution of his qualities the genius of mythology did not even gloss over his malignant attributes. The fascination with which he intoxicated the souls of the first sinners, depriving them at once of purity and immortality, of the image of God and of the life of angels, was symbolically remembered and fatally celebrated in the orgies of Bacchus, where *serpents* crowned the heads of the Bacchantes, and the "Poculum Boni Dæmonis" circulated under the auspices of the Ophite hierogram chased upon its rim[1]. But the most remarkable remembrance of the power of the paradisiacal serpent is displayed in the position which he retains in Tartarus. A *cunodracontic* Cerberus guards the gates; *serpents* are coiled upon the chariot wheels of Proserpine; *serpents* pave the abyss of torment; and even *serpents* constitute the caduceus of Mercury, the talisman which he holds when he conveys the soul to Tartarus. The image of the *serpent* is stamped upon every mythological fable connected with the realms of Pluto. Is it not then *probable*, that in the universal symbol of hea-

[1] See Archæol. vol. 7.

then idolatry we recognize the universal object of primitive worship—THE SERPENT OF PARADISE.

But this inference depends not on *mere symbolical worship:* for we trace the sacred serpent, by the lamp of tradition, through the waters of the deluge to the world which they overwhelmed. In the mythological systems of Hindûstan and Egypt, we find him, as THE CAUSE of that awful calamity, moving in the waters, and troubling the deep: and a Brahminical legend indicates his existence even *before that visitation.* In the channel of the river Ganges, in the province of Bahar, is a remarkable rock, upon which is sculptured a figure of Veshnu reposing upon a serpent. This serpent is fabled to have been the goddess DEVI or ISI, who assumed the form to carry Veshnu over the deluge. The sleep of Veshnu indicates *the period between the two worlds*[1]. May we not then infer that this legend alludes to the existence of the sacred serpent in the world before the flood? And further, is it not probable, since this sacred serpent is confounded with ISI,

[1] See "Ophiol. in Hindûstan."

(the Isis of Egypt—the Eve of Scripture[1]), that the tradition recognises THE SERPENT OF PARADISE?

The only worship which can vie with that of the serpent in antiquity or universality, is the adoration of the SUN. But uniformly with the progress of the solar superstition, has advanced the sacred serpent from Babylon to Peru. *If* the worship of THE SUN, therefore, was the first deviation from the truth; the worship of THE SERPENT was one of the first innovations of *idolatry*. Whatever doubt may exist as to which was the *first* error, little doubt can arise as to the *primitive* and *antediluvian* character of *both*. For in the earliest heathen records we find them inexplicably interwoven as the first of superstitions. Thus Egyptian mythology informs us, that HELIUS *(the sun)* was the first of the Egyptian gods; for in early history, kings and gods are generally confounded. But Helius married OPS, *the serpent deity!* and became father of Osiris, Isis, Typhon, Apollo, and Venus[2]: a tradition

[1] See "FABLES"—*Typon*.

[2] Euseb. Præp. Evang. p. 45, citing Manetho.

which would make the superstitions coeval. This fable being reduced to more simple terms, informs us, that the SUN, having married the SERPENT, became, by this union, the father of *Adam and Eve*, THE EVIL SPIRIT, *the serpent-solar deity*, and LUST; which appears to be a confusion of scriptural truths, in which chronological order is sacrificed from the simplification of a fable. But—*ex pede Herculem*—from the small fragments of the truth which are here combined, we may judge of the original dimensions of the knowledge whose ruins are thus heaped together. We may conclude, that since *idolatry*, *lust*, *the serpent*, and *the evil spirit*, are here said to have been synchronous with THE FIRST MAN *and* WOMAN, the whole fable is little more than a mythological version of the events in Paradise.

The first sinners and *the first sin* are well placed in the same family with the author of all evil: and as, through the serpent, *he* was introduced into Paradise; and through the serpent, *they* died from righteousness, and were born anew in sin,—THE SERPENT may well be allegorically represented as the parent of each.

The reviver of Ophiolatreia, after the flood, must have been one of the family of Noah; for so high can we trace its post-diluvian history. Sanchoniathon tells us, that "SATURN, coming into the south country, gave the whole of Egypt to THE GOD TAAUTUS for his kingdom[1]."

Now Taautus was the inventor of post-diluvian Ophiolatreia[2]; and since Saturn was Noah, according to every system for the interpretation of mythology, it is historically certain that, during the lifetime of this patriarch, or shortly after his death, THE WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT was revived in Egypt.

But not only in Egypt must we look for its early revival. We have traced it in countries which never could have had intercourse with the kingdom of Taautus, until the voyages of the Phœnicians, or the conquests of the Romans, opened a passage for its mysteries. And then —*here*, in the remotest regions of the earth —amidst the fastnesses of Wales and the wilds of Wiltshire,—were found a people who adored the same god, symbolized by the same serpent,

[1] Apud. Euseb. Præp. Ev. p. 39. [2] Ibid.

and propitiated with the same sacrifice—A HUMAN VICTIM! Who remembered in their mythology the same primeval tradition of THE WOMAN PERSECUTED BY THE MALIGNANT DRAGON; and blended with their fables such records of the Fall of Man as could hardly have been devised by their own invention, irrelative as they are to every other part of their idolatry.

Thus the veneration of the OAK (which did not conduce to any national utility, as they never cut it down,) was totally unconnected with their theological system, and must therefore have been handed down to them by immemorial custom, the meaning of which had been lost in the darkness of ages.

The same adoration of *trees*, in conjunction with serpent-worship, prevailed in the still darker regions of Sarmatia, and among the infinitely more degraded natives of the coast of Africa. And who can have the hardihood to venture an assertion, that such a superstition was the invention of one polished nation, and conveyed, by their commercial or warlike enterprises, into countries cut off by trackless oceans or immeasurable deserts? Who can assert, with any

hope of making good his hypothesis, that the Egyptian philosopher, or Phœnician merchant, or Assyrian conqueror, instructed in the same worship the grovelling Whidanese, the erratic Sarmatian, or the inaccessible Briton?

The inland progress of the sacred serpent might have been conducted by Chaldæan colonies into some of the neighbouring districts; but in ages when the exploits of a single traveller furnished matter for fables as numerous as they were marvellous, it is not at all likely that a Chaldæan colony would penetrate on the one side beyond the Oural, or on the other beyond the Himaleh mountains, in sufficient force to revolutionize the religion of those regions. And yet in remote China, and secluded Scandinavia, THE SAME SERPENT holds his dominion in the sea, and his reign upon the land! But if to these distant dwellings of the sacred dragon we add his immemorial habitation in Peru and Mexico, the improbability that Ophiolatreia was a Chaldæan invention increases with additional force: and if Chaldæa be deprived of the sceptre of universal proselytism, where is the nation that can contend for the distinction?

With respect to the introduction of Ophiolatreia into Britain, it is historically certain that the Phœnicians were the only people of antiquity who pushed their adventurous barques into these remote latitudes: and although in some particulars the languages and religions coincide, yet we cannot imagine that such a priesthood as THE DRUIDS could have sprung from the slow and solitary vessels which, creeping along the coasts of Africa and Gaul, discharged their ballast upon the desert Cassiterides; and, unconscious of any object but that of accumulating wealth, returned home with the tin ore of those valuable islands. That accidental circumstances, in the lapse of ages, introduced many innovations into the religion of the West, we can readily believe: but to recognize in the Druids, the magi of Chaldea, the philosophers of Egypt, or the Brahmins of Hindûstan, (except inasmuch as they are all probably descended from the original idolatrous priesthood dispersed at Babel,) is a refinement of conjecture which requires more substantial proofs than have hitherto been advanced. Identity of remote origin will satisfactorily account for identity of opinions in countries so separated by land and

sea, without supposing any subsequent intercourse by colonies or navigation.

It appears, then, that no nations were so geographically remote, or so religiously discordant, but that one—and ONLY ONE [1]—superstitious characteristic was common to all: that the most civilized and the most barbarous bowed down with the same devotion to the same engrossing deity; and that this deity either *was*, or was *represented by*, the same SACRED SERPENT.

It appears also that in most, if not all, the civilized countries where this serpent was worshipped, some fable or tradition which involved his history, directly or indirectly, alluded to THE FALL OF MAN in Paradise, in which THE SERPENT was concerned.

[1] It is but justice to the reader to state that Mr. Faber objects to this *exclusiveness* which I have attributed to the universality of serpent-worship:—"It formed part of a regular system," he observes, "which *system* was *universal;* but serpent-worship was not universal *as opposed to* hero-worship and Sabianism." My assertion was founded upon the argument, that in some parts of *Africa*, and in *Sarmatia*, where the living serpent was the supreme deity, there are no traces of any dæmon-worship or Sabianism. Whereas in *every* country where the SUN was an object of idolatry, the SERPENT was also venerated as divine.

What follows, then, but that *the most ancient account* respecting the cause and nature of this seduction must be the one from which all the rest are derived which represent the victorious serpent,—victorious over man in a state of innocence, and subduing his soul in a state of sin, into the most abject veneration and adoration of himself.

This account we have in the writings of MOSES,—confessedly the most ancient historical records which exist in the world. The writings of MOSES, therefore, contain the true history; and the serpent of Paradise is the prototype of the serpent of all the superstitions. From his "*subtilty*" arose the adoption of the serpent as an emblem of "*wisdom*;" from his *revealing* the hidden virtue of the forbidden fruit, the use of the same reptile in *divination*; from his conversation with Eve, the notion that the serpent was *oracular*: and, after this, the transition from a SYMBOL, a TALISMAN, and an ORACLE, to a GOD, was rapid and imperceptible, and would naturally have taken place even had there been no tradition of the celestial origin of the fallen spirit, who became the serpent-tempter.

II. In reviewing the hopes and traditions of the Gentiles, we find that they not only preserved in their mythological writings a memorial of THE FALL, but also a strong vestige of the promise of REDEMPTION. The "*bruising of the serpent*" was equally known in the mythologies of Egypt, Hindûstan, Greece, Persia, Scandinavia, and Mexico. In each of these we recognize a TRIUMPHANT GOD, and a VANQUISHED SERPENT. Neither can this, any more than the remembrance of the fall, be a casual coincidence. There is nothing in the belief which would *naturally* suggest itself to the imaginations of people so remote and so unconnected. In respect of this expectation, therefore, we may similarly conclude, that where so many independent traditions coincide, the most ancient must be the one from which all the rest were originally derived. This will again bring us to the Promise of Redemption, in the curse upon the serpent, as revealed to Adam. But it will do more:—it will teach us IN WHAT LIGHT the first of men who fell, and to whom first it was announced that "*the wages of sin is* DEATH," looked forward to "the gift of God, which is ETERNAL LIFE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST,

OUR LORD." It will teach us that neither Adam, any more than ourselves, "looked for transitory promises;" that the REDEMPTION, which was the object of his ardent faith, was not *temporal*, but SPIRITUAL; that the agent of that redemption, in his heaven-directed eye, was not *a mere man*, heir of his infirmities, his sins, and his mortality, but "GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH;" and that, *through the sufferings* of this JUST ONE, in his conflict with the evil spirit, he expected to "*bruise the serpent's head.*"

That such was the faith of Adam, *the faith of all the world declares.* For what was this faith in respect of THE VANQUISHED SERPENT, and the TRIUMPHANT GOD?—APOLLO slays *Python;* HERCULES, *the Hesperian dragon;* CRISHNA, *the king of the Nagas;* and THOR, "*the serpent which is cast into the sea.*" But Apollo for his victory is doomed "*to depart from the world*[1];" Hercules and Crishna are *bitten by the serpent;* the former in the HEEL! while Thor gains the victory *only with his life.* Yet Apollo, Hercules, Crishna, and Thor, are all INCARNATE DEITIES!

If, therefore, the legends which represent their triumphs be derived from the promise of

[1] Plutarch de def. Orac.

Redemption in Paradise, the idea of their INCARNATION must have been derived from the same source. It is evident, therefore, that Adam, or (which is the same thing) Noah, must have considered the promise to imply a Redemption, which would be wrought by the sufferings of "GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH."

That Adam "did not look for transitory promises," is further evident from the condition in which he was left by the Fall; which, if not alleviated by some abiding hope, must have accelerated his death by accumulated miseries.

To the serpent God said, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*[1]." Darkly as this promise may have conveyed the hope, that a hope of redemption *was* effectually conveyed by it, we have every reason to believe, from the mere fact that "*the days of Adam were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died*[2]." He died at an age to which he could not, humanly calculating, have arrived, had his life been so wretched as the fall from innocence and the curse of God would have made it, had that fall been irrecoverable, and

[1] Gen. iii. 15. [2] Gen. v. 5.

that curse irremovable. For when we consider that through this protracted period, he sustained the trials of an "accursed" soil, of children given but to be taken away, of an anxious mind and an afflicted body,—anxiety and affliction being the necessary result of his lapse from innocence; when we consider that his memory, however impaired, was not destroyed, but could carry back his mind to a period of happiness now no longer existing; and that his body, however fresh, and beautiful, and vigorous, must one day "return to the earth as it was;"—we must be assured that he had SOMETHING, *beyond his present hopes*, to comfort and support him in his pilgrimage upon earth; that he had some well-grounded and abiding faith in another existence, more suitable to the energies, and more consoling to the necessities of the soul. The only comfort which revelation has announced for his support, is the promise contained in *the curse upon the serpent*; and as it would be the extreme of absurdity to interpret this *literally*, we must look for a figurative and spiritual interpretation. Such an interpretation has been put upon it by Scripture; but we can arrive at the same conclusion by independent arguments. And as such

a line of reasoning is sometimes admitted by those who will "hear neither Moses nor the prophets," neither Christ nor the evangelists, it may not be irrelevant to the object of the present treatise, as we began with "observations on THE FALL," to conclude with similar remarks on THE REDEMPTION.

THE

WORSHIP OF THE SERPENT.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE REDEMPTION OF MAN.

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From the moment in which Adam, by transgression, fell, it became apparent that, *of himself*, he could never rise again. The *cause* of his fall being *entire disobedience*, the *effects* of that cause could only be alleviated by *entire obedience*,—and *this* he was not in a condition to pay. His nature had become corrupt; his mind, his will, and his affections, were depraved; and "the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually." In his inability, therefore, to pay perfect obedience in his own person, he was compelled to rely, for the redemption of his soul, on *the perfect obedience of another being*. For the law of God was to be kept; and some one must keep it, *to justify man*, and *glorify God*.

But even this would not have been sufficient for the redemption of the soul of man; since *no obedience*, however perfect, can cancel the previous act of *disobedience;* and therefore can never, of itself, remove the guilt. It may indeed recommend the guilty to mercy, but can never make *satisfaction* for the sin.

It was utterly impossible, therefore, for Adam, by any repentance or amendment, to recover his lost communion with God. Something more than entire obedience was necessary to satisfy the JUSTICE of God, before his MERCY could be shown; and nothing less than the *sacrifice* of the Redeemer, AS WELL AS *his entire obedience* to the law, could fulfil the conditions of human redemption. Thus, and thus alone, "Mercy and Truth would meet together; Righteousness and Peace would kiss each other [1]."

But these conditions could not be fulfilled by a mere child of Adam, though "the seed of the woman" was ordained "to bruise the serpent's head." For the subject of atonement being the sins of the whole world, and the Being to be appeased GOD ALMIGHTY, the Mediator

[1] Psalm lxxxv. 10.

must be such as could "speak face to face" with both. This could not be a man, born in the course of natural generation, for such an one could not approach God to satisfy the preliminaries of his JUSTICE. The insurmountable barrier of human imperfection would interpose between the sin and the atonement.

But as, by the sinful disobedience of MAN was forfeited the earthly Paradise, by the sinless obedience of MAN must the heavenly Paradise be entered.

What the natural man could not, by reason of his corruption, accomplish, an incarnate angel, though born of "the seed of the woman," could not effect. For however superior the ministers of God, in heaven, may be to his fallen creatures on earth, their purity is not sufficiently proof against temptation to make the offering of a *sinless* body. For God "chargeth even his angels with folly;" and these in their *spiritual* forms may err, as the angels erred who "kept not their first estate:" *how much more*, then, would they be liable to *sin*, if clothed with the infirmities of human nature!

Since, then, neither man, nor an incarnate

angel, could offer a suitable and sufficient sacrifice for the sin of Adam, there remained but one atonement, *suitable* and *sufficient*,—INCARNATE DIVINITY.

To this, and to no other, could Adam have looked with any reasonable ground for "the hope that was in him." *That he did look for this spiritual redemption* is evident, from the universal expectation of the Gentile world, that an INCARNATE GOD would destroy the SPIRITUAL SERPENT.

To HIM, as the true sacrifice for "*the propitiation of sins*," was the eye of every Pagan, though dimly, directed, when, in accordance with the belief and practice of Abel, the blood of the atoning victim was poured out upon the altar. On HIM, as "*the woman's seed, who would bruise the serpent's head*," was the faith of every Pagan, though ignorantly, reposed, when the fabled heroes of heathen mythology were exalted into the heavens for their services to man on earth. To HIM, as "*the ransom of our souls*" from death, was the hope of every Pagan, though blindly, turned, when oppressed under a sense of the terrors of divine vengeance, he imagined no atonement so avail-

able, to avert the wrath of God, as THE BLOOD OF A HUMAN VICTIM. THIS was "THE UNKNOWN GOD" of all the world, whom every nation, actually, though "*ignorantly worshipped*," in their fables, and in their sacrifices, and in their deified heroes.

The tradition of "the woman's seed" was handed down by the three patriarchs who peopled the earth, after the deluge, to their children's children: and however corrupted by the lapse of time, or the blindness of idolatry, the same tradition may be recognized in the mythology of every nation which has arrived at the comprehension of a religious system. Else, WHY that universal prevalence of *animal sacrifice in propitiation of sins*, which has obtained among the most enlightened, and the most barbarous of mankind? WHY that more extraordinary opinion reduced to practice, that no blood is so available to avert the wrath of God as that of a HUMAN VICTIM? WHY are these opinions found in ALL THE WORLD, if man never fell; if the Redeemer was never promised; if God never said, "I HAVE GIVEN THE BLOOD UPON THE ALTAR TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SOULS—FOR IT IS

THE BLOOD WHICH MAKETH AN ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL[1]?" WHY, moreover, was that wonderful superstition of SERPENT-WORSHIP so generally resorted to by all the world, if the evil spirit never triumphed in the serpent's form? And WHY were those fables so current in mythology, which represent THE SERPENT, *the emblem of the evil spirit*, as finally to be overcome by a hero, born of a CELESTIAL FATHER *and* A TERRESTRIAL MOTHER, who, after his victory, shall be enrolled *among the gods*, if revelation never promised that "THE SEED OF THE WOMAN *should bruise* THE SERPENT'S HEAD?" And, finally, WHY should it have entered into the imagination of mythologists to represent this victorious hero as SLAIN by his dragon enemy, if redemption were not promised *at the price of the Redeemer's life;* if JEHOVAH never said to the apostate serpent, "*Thou shalt bruise* HIS HEEL?"

These are phænomena, to be reconciled by no rule but that of faith in the word of God, which present to the contemplation of the untrembling sceptic a path of the most rugged and unbounded difficulty, through the mazes of which the Christian, with the Bible in

[1] Levit. xvii. 11.

his hand, can alone securely travel. But, interpreted by the Scriptures, they are FACTS of the most solemn and engrossing interest, to which history and fable, religion and superstition, bear equal testimony; which instruct while they admonish, and satisfy while they amaze the mind of the inquirer: and he that would be wise, "wise unto salvation," will "ponder them in his heart."

The humble-minded Christian will consider them with the seriousness which they solemnly demand. He will consider, that the agreement of THE WHOLE WORLD upon a subject, which could not have suggested itself spontaneously to the mind, especially of people most remote and most dissimilar, and placed under circumstances in every other respect discordant, cannot be the result of *conspiracy* or *chance;* but that what has been the belief of ALL MANKIND, however ignorantly expressed, must have had for its origin ONE FAITH, which was founded upon ONE PROMISE, which was accepted upon ONE ASSURANCE—namely, that it was THE TRUTH, and THE REVELATION OF GOD.

Thus if the Redeemer of mankind was "THE SHILOH" of the Jews, "THE DESIRE OF ALL

NATIONS[1]," "THE UNKNOWN GOD" of every worship, and THE TYPIFIED VICTIM of every altar,—we are not only justified in referring this coincidence of belief and practice, but *peremptorily called upon to refer it* to the original revelation made by God to Adam, and through him to all mankind.

2. It is unnecessary to prove what "holy men of God," by "the word of prophecy;" evangelists, by the pen, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and martyrs, by their blood—have testified in characters, "which he may read who runs," that the "Shiloh" of the Jews, "the desire of all nations," "the unknown God" of every worship, whom all mankind *really*, though "ignorantly," adored, is JESUS CHRIST. IT COULD HAVE BEEN NO OTHER. For HE ALONE of all men lived without sin, and died without requiring the mercy of God. He "went

[1] This expression is first made use of in the Septuagint, Gen. xlix. 10; where the word "Shiloh" is most wonderfully paraphrased—*προσδοκία Ἐθνῶν*. So that by the confession of seventy-two elders chosen for their learning out of the twelve tribes of Israel, the Redeemer of man, was "The expectation of the Gentiles," *nearly three centuries before he was born!*

about doing good;" and he only "had the words" and the power "of eternal life." By his patience, by his innocence, by his labours, and by his resignation, he showed himself to be more than an ordinary man; and by his wisdom, by his preaching, by his prophecies, and by his miracles, he evinced himself "a prophet, *yea more than a prophet:*" while the consummating miracles of his resurrection from the grave, and ascension into glory, declared him to be "GOD BLESSED FOR EVER[1]."

This was the true victim, THE SINLESS, THE SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE; by the shedding of whose blood the sin of Adam was atoned for, and Adam restored to the communion which he had lost. That the atonement might be complete, it was indispensably necessary that the victim should be *divine;* in JESUS we behold the DIVINE VICTIM, and in HIS BLOOD the COMPLETE ATONEMENT. For not only the miracles which, *in fulfilment of prophecy*, he wrought; not only the authority, *equivalent to that of God*, which he assumed, and successfully exercised; but even the confession of the

[1] Rom. ix. 5.

evil spirits themselves, declared Jesus to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

To be, however, a SUITABLE, as well as a SUFFICIENT, SACRIFICE for the sins of men, it was necessary that he should be HUMAN. In JESUS we recognize this HUMAN VICTIM, and point him out like Pilate, though with far different feelings, "BEHOLD THE MAN!"

But while sufficiency for the end required the victim to be *divine*, and suitableness to the object demanded a *human sacrifice*, the eternal necessity that "all righteousness should be fulfilled," as peremptorily required *the two natures to be united*. Without THE MAN to *suffer* God would not be satisfied: without THE GOD to *qualify*, THE MAN could not be perfect. In JESUS, therefore, we behold the MYSTERIOUS UNION of GOD and MAN. "*In him it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell*[1];" and "IN HIM DWELT ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY[2]."

3. This was the Redeemer, and this the redemption, in anticipation of which, Adam repined not at the sentence which consigned him to toil and sorrow; which had driven him

[1] Col. i. 19. [2] Col. ii. 9.

from a life of ease to labour—from "a garden of pleasure" to a field of thorns. Though every morsel of bread, and every drop of pure water, brought with it the recollection of his sin and fall: though, "for his sake," the very ground which he tilled was "cursed," and "in sorrow," he was doomed to "eat of it all the days of his life;" though the partner of his affliction was still more afflicted, and, through "sorrow," was condemned to pass to the blessedness of a mother—*yet* did the faith of Adam sustain his sinking spirit—yet did he "eat the bread of labour with thanksgiving;" and *yet* did his loved partner "forget the sorrow for joy that a man was born into the world." For in that bread of labour he recognized the gift of an indulgent Father; and *in that man-child she expected the redemption and consolation of their souls.* Thus, though that consolation and redemption were remote; though ages must roll on ages, and *individuals* become *nations*, before that desired Holy One could enter into his kingdom—*so firm, so constant*, and *so confident* was the hope of Adam, that, in the glance of his prospective faith, he gathered ages into a moment, and nations into an individual, when the voice of his

loved partner exclaimed with holy transport—"*I have gotten* THE MAN *from the Lord*[1]!" And though fond expectation might have given place to despair, when the "child of their many prayers" left them childless in the world, by the murder of his brother, and the banishment of himself—yet still did Adam hope against hope, that "the seed of the woman WOULD bruise the serpent's head." And hence, when instead of him who had been branded with the curse of God, another child was given, *on him* they bestowed the name of SETH—that is "SUBSTITUTED:" for in their hearts they believed that *he was* "*substituted*" for their first-born; in his place to console them through their pilgrimage upon earth, and in his place to redeem them from the last penalty of sin. Thus ADAM "*died in faith, not having received the promises.*" He "died in the faith" of a SPIRITUAL REDEMPTION.

In the same faith had died ABEL; and he evinced it in that sacrifice unto which "God had had respect," as offered in assurance of the blood which should be shed, "once for all," at Calvary.

[1] Gen. iv. 1. See Faber, Hor. Mos. ii. 55.

In the same faith died NOAH, the second father of mankind, and bequeathed it as the best blessing of a departing parent to a surviving child. "*God shall enlarge Japheth,*" was his inspired promise to the son whom temporal prosperity would magnify: but "HE SHALL DWELL IN THE TENTS OF SHEM," was the spiritual and eternal blessing. *In the family of Shem* was the Messiah born, and lived, and died. He "*dwelt*" *as in a tent* "*among them*[1]."

For ages after the deluge the tradition was handed down by each dying patriarch to that son who was destined to be the progenitor of "the hope of Israel;" but the time in which this Holy One would enter into his kingdom being still uncertain, it was not *until upon his death-bed* that the pious patriarch perceived that salvation was still distant. *Then* did the prophetic spirit which was imparted to the dying saint, open the dim eye to pierce into futurity. As the body decayed, the soul gathered strength: as earth receded, heaven approached: as all around him grew dark, all above him was bright. And, "THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

[1] John i. 14—"dwelt among us"—*literally*, "lived as in a tent;" or, "pitched his tent."—ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν.

arising with healing on his wings," disclosed, through the dark clouds of advancing ages, LIFE, and IMMORTALITY, and JESUS CHRIST.

Thus "ABRAHAM *rejoiced to see the day of Christ: he saw it, and was glad*[1]." Thus "ISAAC *blessed Jacob concerning things to come*[2]." Thus JACOB declared his hope and expectation—"*I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*[3]!" Each in his own life-time looked anxiously for the redemption, which each on his death-bed "*saw, but not nigh.*" In the prophetic spirit which afterwards inspired the unworthy Balaam, they perceived that "*a star would come out of Jacob, and a sceptre would arise out of Judah;*" but, like him, they were assured—"*I shall see Him; but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh*[4]." "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, and being persuaded of them, and embracing them, and confessing that they were strangers, and pilgrims on the earth*[5]." "*They did all eat the same spiritual meat; they did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and* THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST[6]."

[1] John viii. 56. [2] Heb. xi. 20. [3] Gen. xlix. 18.
[4] Numb. xxiv. 17. [5] Heb. xi. 13. [6] 1 Cor. x. 3.

Dwelling in tents soon pitched and soon removed; wandering from place to place, as men without a country, they weaned themselves from the follies and fascinations of the world, and fixed their hearts firmly on that place alone, "where true joys only are to be found." The only heritage which they possessed was THE PROMISE; the only land which they purchased was A BURIAL PLACE: the only rest for their bodies was THE GRAVE; the only home of their souls was HEAVEN. "Wherefore God was not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city" —"a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God [1]."

May all, who are partakers of the same abiding hope, partake with them in the fruition of the same unfading glory!

[1] Heb. xi. 16, and 10.

THE END.

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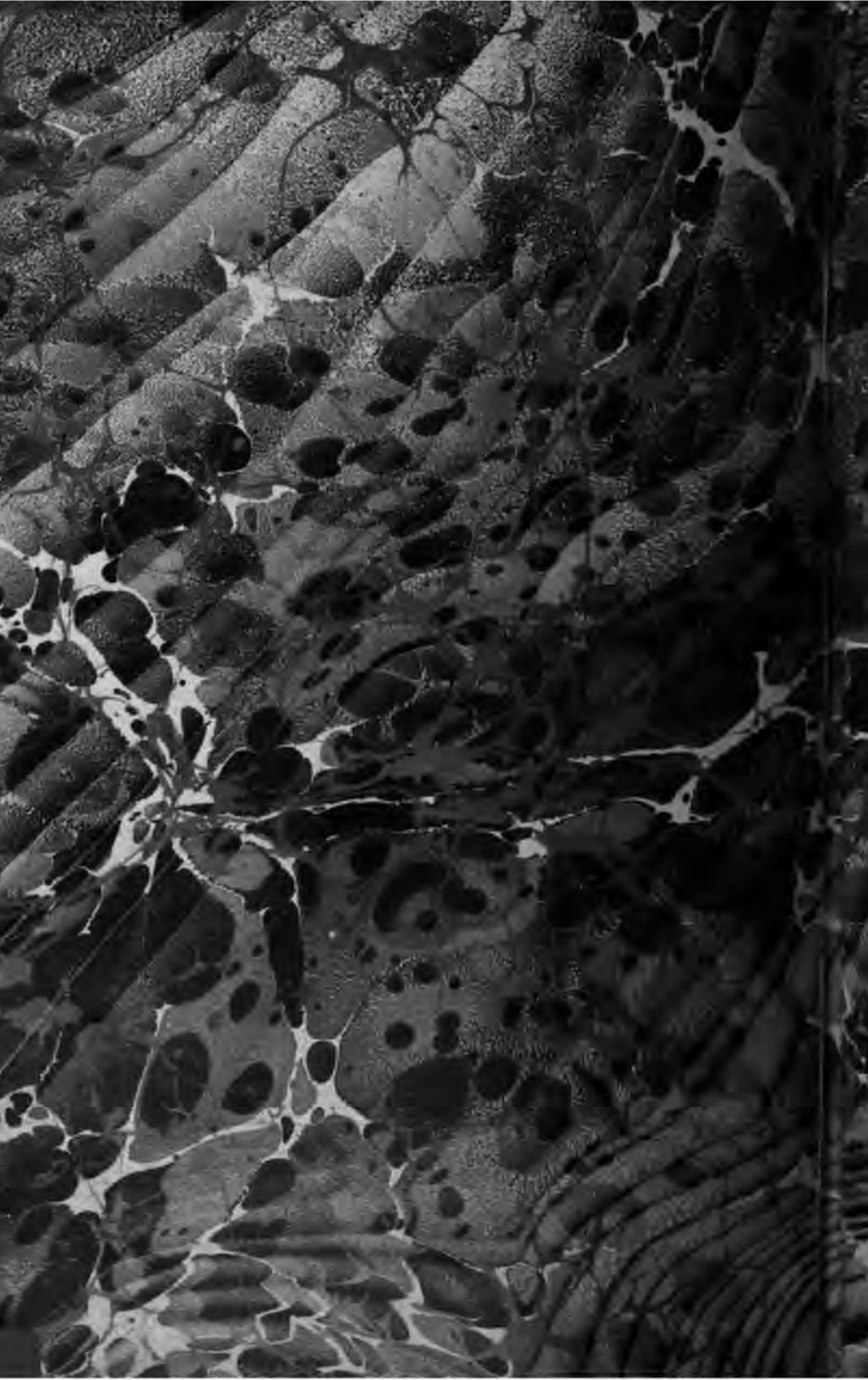

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